Coyke. Oct. 8. 1874. W. M. Inge.

# BOSSUET

## And his Contemporaries

By the Author of

"A Dominican Artist," "Life of S. Francis de Sales,"
etc. etc.

*"The gentleman is learn'd, and a most rare speaker."*
Henry VIII., Act i. s. ii.

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F. F. 113

TO

**The Rev. Henry Parry Liddon, D.D.**

CANON OF ST. PAUL'S

*IN GRATEFUL TOKEN OF A LONG AND*

*DEARLY-PRIZED FRIENDSHIP*

THIS LIFE OF THE EAGLE OF MEAUX

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

# Preface

A LIFE of Bossuet, to be really complete, either from the ecclesiastical or literary point of view, must inevitably expand to a bulk, manifold greater than this volume. His numerous writings, his correspondence, and the vast number of memorable men and women whose histories are more or less interwoven with his own, present a field of historical interest in which the chief difficulty is less what to take than what to leave. But the present volume does not pretend to do more than suggest and characterise.

In the wide expanse of Church history of the latter centuries, few periods are more interesting than that here touched upon, and in one respect the life of Bossuet will appeal very strongly to the heart of many an English Churchman now. He

lived in an atmosphere of controversy, with all its accompaniments of disappointment and exasperation. He had to mourn over what seemed to be the strange insensibility of persons in the highest place of authority to the dearest interests of the Church, or, worse still, over the mischief which their short-sightedness inflicted on her. He, the first divine in Europe, could permit himself to say in reference to the reigning Pope, "Well-meant ignorance is a grievous calamity in high places! Let us mourn and pray!" His words, alas! may have their application in later times. If we in this age and country cannot escape from a sense of their almost prophetic appositeness,—let us not forget the precept with which they close.

There is no popular Life of Bossuet to be found in France—Cardinal de Bausset's is the only one, and that is bulky and dry. Moreover, when he wrote it (in 1814), the Abbé Le Dieu's Mémoires and Journal were not published, and though he had access to them, and frequently quotes them, he does not at all make the familiar use that we might

expect of the Secretary's somewhat indiscriminate information. Floquet's "Études sur la Vie de Bossuet" are most useful, but they are tedious in minute detail, and fitter for reference than reading;—moreover, the three large volumes only carry one as far as Bossuet's appointment to the Preceptorship of the Dauphin in 1670.

The Abbé Vaillant's "Études sur les Sermons de Bossuet" (written 1851) are a valuable adjunct in studying those Sermons.

The edition of Bossuet's own works, referred to throughout this book, is that now generally accepted in France as the most perfect;—carefully prepared by F. Lachat from the original MSS., and expurgating interpolations and alterations which, like most similar "improvements," damaged the writings, and did injustice to their author. This edition, in thirty-one volumes, is published by Louis Vivès, Paris, and comprises sundry MSS. not contained in other editions.

The edition of Madame de Sevigné's Letters quoted is Gault de Sant-Germain's, published by

Dalibon, Paris, 1823. All references throughout are direct, and carefully verified.

It is impossible to write of Bossuet without entering upon the history of his most interesting, most attractive contemporary, Fénelon ; but as that could not be followed here, without extending the book to an undue size, the Archbishop of Cambrai's Life will shortly follow as a separate volume.

SARUM, *October* 1874.

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# CHAPTER I.

## BOSSUET'S EARLY DAYS.

BIRTH AT DIJON — FAMILY — BAPTISM — CLAUDE BOSSUET — EDUCATION — FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE BIBLE — JESUIT COLLEGE — DESCARTES — GOES TO PARIS — COLLÉGE DE NAVARRE — NICOLAS CORNET — FIRST THESIS OF PHILOSOPHY — INTRODUCTION TO THE GREAT WORLD — HOTEL RAMBOUILLET — EXTEMPORE SERMON — DE RANCÉ — TAKES HIS BACHELOR'S DEGREE — GRAND CONDÉ PRESENT — OPINIONS CONCERNING THE THEATRE — CARDINAL RICHELIEU — HIS DEATH — WARS OF THE FRONDE — SORBONNE ORATION — PATRISTIC STUDY — ST. AUGUSTINE — DOCTOR'S DEGREE — APPOINTED ARCHDEACON OF METZ — MARSHAL DE SCHOMBERG — RECEIVES PRIEST'S ORDERS — S. VINCENT DE PAUL — ORDINAND'S RETREATS — BISHOP POTIER — HENRI DE BOURBON, TITULAR BISHOP OF METZ — LIFE AT METZ — PROTESTANT CONTROVERSIES — PAUL FERRY — THE "RÉFUTATION" — FILLES DE LA PROPAGATION DE LA FOI — THEIR RULE.

JACQUES BÉNIGNE BOSSUET was born at Dijon, in a house behind the Cathedral, No. 10 Place St. Jean, during the night of September 27-28, 1627, and was baptized on September 29th,[1] in the

[1] Bossuet himself says, in a letter to Mme. Cornuau, that he was baptized on S. Michael's Day, and the Abbé Le Dieu, his secretary, repeatedly mentions the fact of the Bishop's celebrating Mass on that festival as the anniversary of his baptism; but

parish church of St Jean close adjoining, now unhappily desecrated and become the Marché du Midi. His parents were bourgeois—of a Burgundian family, originally coming from the small town of Seurre (now Bellegarde), but the immediate ancestors of the future Bishop of Meaux had settled at Dijon early in the sixteenth century, and became important members of the local government. The Cathedral of Dijon is dedicated to S. Bénigne the Apostle of Burgundy, which probably accounts for the name being borne both by the best known of all the Bossuets and by his father. His mother's name was Madeleine Mochet or Mochette, and he himself was the seventh child and fifth son out of a family numbering ten in all. His grandfather, Jacques Bossuet, the contemporary and friend of Frémyots, Rabutins de Chantal, and other familiar names, maintained an old custom (resembling our English habit, common at least in the latter generation, of entering births, deaths, and other family events in the big family Bible) of recording all the

M. Floquet gives a copy of the parish register of St. Jean, according to which September 27th was the actual date:—

"Vingt-sept Septembre 1627: Jacques Bénigne, fils du noble M. Bénigne Bossuet, advocat en parlement, et de damoiselle Marguerite Mochet, baptisé le vingt-sept Septembre. Son parrain, Jacques Bossuet, Conseiller du Roy en son parlement de Bourgogne; la marraine, damoiselle Marie des Barres, femme de M. de Frasans, grefier aux finances."—*Études sur la Vie de Bossuet*, vol. i. p. 3.

principal circumstances in the history of his household; and in this register, written in the old man's hand, frequently annotated with pious words of prayer or aspiration, Jacques Bénigne's birth is found entered, accompanied by the words of Holy Scripture: "Circumduxit eam, et docuit, et custodivit quasi pupillam oculi"[1]—words which he had just been reading as he sat, Bible in hand, waiting to hear that his daughter-in-law was safely delivered, during the silent watches of that autumn night.

At the time of Jacques Bénigne's birth, the Bossuet family had waxed so numerous, that there was no room for them in the parliament or official life of Dijon, and his father (who had filled the office of *Avocat postulant* before the Grand Conseil at Paris in 1612 and 1613, as well as that of *Échevin*—twice over unanimously elected—of Dijon) obeyed the summons of a maternal uncle, Antoine de Bretaigne, who had been appointed President of the Parliament of Metz by Cardinal Richelieu, and removed to that city as *Doyen des Conseillers* in 1633—leaving, however, his family in Dijon, where his eldest brother, Claude Bossuet, supplied a father's place to his numerous children. This uncle was a man of literary tastes, and as Jacques Bénigne and his favourite brother

[1] "He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His Eye."—DEUT. xxxii. 10.

Antoine lived in his house, he soon made a home of his uncle's library, and before he was seven years old began to look upon books as the companions and chief interest of his life; to turn to them as his best amusement and greatest pleasure; and consequently study became a passion, a craving of his whole being, which required to be controlled and disciplined, as it assuredly was hereafter, when action as well as thought and study claimed so large a part of his life.

His education was carried on at the Jesuits' College, but probably the informal instructions of his Uncle Claude were hardly a less important feature in that education: the boy's rapid perceptions and prodigious memory were a constant delight to the classical scholar, who was devoted to literature, and possessed a fine library both at Dijon and at his country house at Aiserey, where the boys usually spent their holidays with their uncle and his two sons. Claude Bossuet took pains to guide his nephew's taste, and especially stimulated him to learn by heart stores of classic poetry, which he considered the surest way of forming a scholar's language and style. Year by year the father, Bénigne Bossuet, used to come from Metz to see his children, and his paternal pride grew stronger each time, as he saw the progress made by his seventh child, and heard the enthusiastic

reports of his teachers. Latin and Greek were a congenial food for his quick, brilliant intellect. Bossuet revelled in a familiar knowledge of their stores; and there he might have remained, a graceful, profound classical scholar, and nothing more, had it not pleased God, by one of those trifling incidents which men call chance, to develop a new and deeper stream wherein his thirsting spirit should drink deep. It sounds strange to hear of Bossuet's becoming acquainted with the Bible by accident; but so it was. Passages and narrations, of course, he was familiar with; through offices, instructions, and sermons; but the Word of God, in its wondrous beauty, its combination of history, prophecy, poetry, and philosophy, he had not handled, until one day he came upon the Sacred Book in his uncle's room, and plunged eagerly into its holy stores, while his father and uncle were talking politics. The Bible had been left open at the Prophecies of Isaiah, and the boy, as he read the inspired poetry, flushed with admiration and enthusiasm, till, unable any longer to control his excitement, he burst forth and read out aloud the marvellous strains which fascinated his whole soul, to the two elder men, who listened, half awe-struck, to the boyish reciter. "This was the first meeting," says one of the Bishop's devoted students, "between Isaiah and Bossuet, and it worked a very revolution in the

soul of the ardent, impressionable child."[1] In after years the great Bishop, whose influence probably exceeded that of any other individual in the Church of his period, used to delight to dwell upon what the unsealing of that fountain of truth had been to him,[2] on the marvellous light and glow and warmth which overpowered him, and eclipsed for ever the fascinations of classical learning—a learning henceforth by no means despised or neglected, but used as a handmaid to that higher knowledge which passeth all things. Bossuet asked leave to take possession of the Holy Book, and from that day it was his constant companion. Go where he might, Bossuet never was without his Bible or his New Testament; travelling, driving from place to place, in society, walking, even during the long intervals of High Mass, he might be continually seen with it in his hand, often closed,

[1] Floquet, vol. i. p. 65.

[2] "Le fleuve naissant avait reconnu comme son haut réservoir natal et son berceau. Il s'y plongea, il en découla, il y remonta sans cesse, il n'en sortit plus . . . l'Ancien, le Nouveau Testament, médité, remédité sans cesse dans toutes ses parties; ce fut du premier jour sa principale, sa perpétuelle lecture, celle sur laquelle il aspirera à vieillir et à mourir: *Certe in his consenescere, his immori, summa votorum est*, disait-il. Chacun a son idéal de vie heureuse, sa maison d'Horace en perspective: pour le profond et grand chrétien, jeune ou vieillissant, il n'y avait d'autre maison que celle de *mon Père*."—SAINTE BEUVE, *Nouveaux Lundis*, vol. ii. pp. 343, 344.

his forefinger between the leaves, while he pondered deeply the words he just had read; and almost every time that he entered his study (so says his devoted secretary, the Abbé Le Dieu), his first act was to take a pen and rapidly write down the thoughts and impressions he had been gathering. He was continually quoting S. Jerome's words to Nepotian, "Let this Sacred Book never leave your hands;" and he used to say that he had ever found it "the source of all doctrine and all holiness of life." The Abbé Le Dieu, who spent twenty years in the closest companionship with Bossuet, records that he cannot remember any day to have passed on which he did not see his venerable chief making fresh notes and annotations on the pages of his Bible, although, as the secretary adds, he certainly knew the text almost entirely by heart. Nevertheless he read and studied it perpetually afresh, and it was a rule known in his household that, wherever he might be—in Paris, at Meaux, at Germigny, at Versailles, at home, travelling, or at Court, a Bible and a Concordance were always to be at hand on his writing-table. "Je ne pourrais vivre sans cela" ("I cannot live without that"), he used to say. He used to read Holy Scripture continually with as much attention as though he had never opened it before,—one of his biographers says,—and yet perhaps it was really more often medi-

tation than reading. These early habits will readily account for what strikes one so marvellously in reading Bossuet's voluminous writings—his almost unequalled readiness and singularly happy application of Holy Scripture, and the wonderful way in which all his thoughts and expressions are founded on it.

Not unnaturally the Jesuit Fathers, under whom Bossuet's powerful talents were developing, realised how useful a member he would be of their Society,[1] and as his course of rhetoric and "humanities" was about to end, the professors sounded their pupil as to his future career, indicating the flattering reception which would be afforded him by the body which had already opened the field of literary distinction to him. Bossuet himself seems to have had no strong inclination as to his course: he referred all decisions to his father and uncle; and the latter, who by no means wished his favourite nephew to join the Society, urged Bénigne Bossuet to send him at once to Paris for the completion of his education, on the plea that nowhere else could the necessary *cours de philosophie* be so well followed.

Descartes' philosophy was then beginning to be

[1] Notwithstanding his education, Bossuet never was attached to the Jesuits, although, of course, he had personal friends among them; and in later years a continual war went on between the great Bishop of Meaux and their Society.—See LE DIEU, *Journal*, vol. iv. p. 192, &c. &c.

famous (he was born in 1596), and in spite of Voltaire's contemptuous sneers,[1] his influence upon the minds of men was great. "The lively faith and ardent piety of Descartes is well known," says the Abbé Gratry, himself one of the profoundest philo-

[1] "Le plus grand mathématicien de son temps, mais le philosophe qui connût moins la nature."—*Siècle de Louis XIV.* ii. 340.

Compare with Abbé Gratry's article on Descartes:

"Je ne dirai pas:

'Enfin Descartes vint, et le premier en France,'

il fonda la philosophie, en tendant à la raison humaine sa liberté. Je ne connais point le fondateur de la philosophie; et la raison humaine, depuis bien des siècles, était libre: Jésus Christ l'avait délivrée, avec tout l'homme. Mais sans exagérer l'influence de Descartes, il est bien manifeste qu'il a imprimé à son siècle une grande et féconde impulsion. . . . Pour commencer, il va de suite au centre de la philosophie, au fond et au principe de la raison, qui est Dieu, et il y reste pendant presque toute sa carrière. . . . Selon Descartes c'est dans notre âme que nous voyons Dieu: cette vue de notre âme, image de Dieu, actuellement éclairée de Dieu, sans quoi elle ne serait pas visible, c'est l'idée de Dieu. Notre idée de Dieu renferme donc la vue directe de notre âme que Dieu éclaire, et la vue indirecte de Dieu qui éclaire l'âme. L'idée de l'Être parfait est mise en nous par l'Être parfait. L'idée de l'Être parfait est un effet qui dépasse la puissance d'un d'être imparfait; je puis le concevoir, mais seulement sous l'influence de l'Être parfait: je puis voir dans une glace le soleil qui n'y est pas; mais je ne saurais l'y voir si le soleil n'existait pas, et ne mettait son image dans la glace. L'idée de Dieu, c'est Dieu vu dans le miroir de l'âme: comparaison si vraie, si profonde, si exacte, que nul ne sait ce que c'est qu'une idée, s'il ne la comprend."—*Connaissance de Dieu*, vol. i. p. 362, etc.

sophers of France, "and he knew where reason must lead men. But he had his own object, and this energetic friend of truth resolved to consecrate his life to consolidating all truth, by endeavouring to educate reason as taken from her own point."[1] Bossuet, who studied Descartes profoundly, was not blind to the dangers which might arise from his system. "I foresee," he wrote to Père Lami, "a great warfare now rising up against the Church under the name of *Philosophie Cartésienne.* I foresee more than one heresy springing from out its bosom,—from, to my mind, its *misunderstood* principles." Nevertheless he studied it earnestly, meeting with an able guide in the venerable Nicolas Cornet, who was at this time (1642) *Grand Maître* of the Collége de Navarre[2]—the

[1] *Connaissance de Dieu,* vol. i. p. 390.

[2] "Un docteur de l'ancienne marque, de l'ancienne simplicité, de l'ancienne probité, consulté de tous, non point en France seulement, mais à l'étranger, au loin; en qui le Saint-Siége eut créance; dont les avis sur toutes les affaires ecclésiastiques, recherchés comme l'avaient été plusieurs siècles auparavant ceux de Gerson, de Pierre d'Ailly, de Henri de Gand, étaient accueillis avec non moins de respect: estimé des rois Louis XIII. et Louis XIV. l'âme de leurs *Conseils de Conscience;* le bras droit du Cardinal de Richelieu; puis du Cardinal Mazarin, empressés successivement à le consulter chaque jour, et prompts sur toutes choses à le croire; oracle de la Faculté de théologie, qui plusieurs fois l'élut son *syndic,* et déférait fort à ses lumières; austère, vivant de peu; inexorable envers lui-même; se refusant toutes choses; la main cependant ouverte sans cesse pour donner;

favourite college in Paris for the young nobles who flocked up from the country, either really to study or to get a name for having studied.[1] Doctor Cornet, perhaps, proved his title to be called a philosopher in men's eyes by his quiet contempt for the good things of the world;—while all the notabilities of the State, and of France itself, from Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin onwards, consulted him on every possible subject, he stedfastly persisted in refusing all emoluments or honours,—unostentatiously rejecting the

honoré de tous les prélats du royaume ; pressé mais en vain, par les deux Cardinaux, par Anne d'Autriche, par le roi lui-même, d'accepter des abbayes, des prélatures, lui cependant content de sa condition, de son revenu propre, auquel il joint en bénéfices, douze cents livres à peine, avec de si faibles ressources faisant largement l'aumône ; ne désirant, n'ambitionnant rien que pour Navarre, qui toujours lui sera chère. Qui n'a entendu parler de ce procès sollicité par Cornet, de bonne foi, dans l'interêt d'un ami et recommandé comme juste, encore qu'il ne le fût pas ; gagné toutefois à l'audience, par l'effet sans doute de l'aveugle confiance qu'avaient inspirée aux magistrats les officieuses démarches du grand maître ; après quoi, l'injustice de cette decision suggerée, pensa-t-il, par ses instances, lui étant devenue manifeste, Cornet se devait hâter, lui dont les ressources étaient si médiocres, d'indemniser pleinement le perdant, à qui bien innocemment il avait pu nuire, en sollicitant contre lui."—FLOQUET, vol. i. p. 75.

[1] It was to the Collége de Navarre that Francis de Sales' father wished to send him some sixty years earlier, when the saint, dreading the fashionable tone of that college and its many temptations, prevailed over his father's pride, and obtained his consent to go to the Collége de Clermont instead.

Archbishopric of Bourges, and other high places, and continuing to the last to live on his humble income of twelve hundred livres.

Nicolas Cornet encouraged Bossuet to go on acquiring a still more perfect knowledge of Greek, while he heartily re-echoed all his pupil's opinions as to making Holy Scripture the foundation and ceaseless companion of all other study. Bossuet's extensive range did not include mathematics;—for this science he never had any inclination, and he even looked upon it as useless and unprofitable for the clergy.[1]

[1] The Abbé Le Dieu says that he was afraid of indulging in what he called the "curiosities of mathematics." He used to say, so his secretary records, that it was too abstract, too absorbing a study to be profitable to ecclesiastics. In one of his *Élévations*, Bossuet gives a noble lesson to scientific men. "Philosophes de nos jours," he says, "de quelque rang que vous soyez, ou observateurs des astres, ou contemplateurs de la nature inférieure, et attachés à ce qu'on appelle physique, ou occupés des sciences abstraites qu'on appelle mathématiques, où la vérité semble présider plus que dans les autres; je ne veux pas dire que vous n'ayez de dignes objets de vos pensées; car de vérité en vérité vous pouvez aller jusqu'à Dieu, qui est la Vérité des vérités, la source de la vérité, la Vérité même, où subsistent les vérités que vous appelez éternelles, les vérités immuables et invariables qui ne peuvent pas ne pas être vérités, et que tous ceux qui ouvrent les yeux voient en eux-mêmes, et néanmoins au-dessus d'eux-mêmes; puisqu'elles règlent leurs raisonnements comme ceux des autres, et président aux connaissances de tout ce qui voit et qui entend, soit hommes, soit anges. C'est cette vérité que vous devez chercher dans vos sciences. Cultivez donc ces

Nevertheless, he by no means denied to that great science the respect due to it, and took pleasure in listening to the great mathematicians of his time developing their problems and theories. In one of his most striking sermons, preached in 1666 before the King,[1] he breaks forth on this subject with one of his bursts of eloquence: "I am not among those who so intensely prize human knowledge, nevertheless I confess that I cannot look unmoved upon the marvellous insight which science has given us into nature, or the wondrous inventions which art has adapted to man's use. Of a truth man has well-nigh changed the face of the world. . . . He has mounted up to the heavens; he has made the very stars serve as guides to his travel, and calls the sun itself to give account, as it were, of all its movements. . . . But consider a moment, brethren, and ask yourselves how so weak and defenceless a being as man could acquire such ascendancy over creation, were not his spirit rendered superior to all visible nature by the immortal

sciences, mais ne vous y laissez point absorber : ne présumez pas, et ne croyez pas être quelque chose plus que les autres, parceque vous savez les propriétés et les raisons des grandeurs et des petitesses : vaine pâture des esprits curieux et faibles, qui après tout ne mène à rien qui existe, et qui n'a rien de solide qu'autant que, par l'amour de la vérité et l'habitude de la connoitre dans des objets certains, elle fait chercher la véritable et utile certitude en Dieu seul."—*Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 282.

[1] *Ibid.* vol. ix. p. 365.

Spirit of God breathed into him, by that Likeness in which he was framed, even the Image of God? Verily, nowise else were it possible!"

Bossuet's training at the Collége de Navarre was all tending to fit him for his future career. At the end of his first year, when only sixteen, he was called upon to maintain his "thesis of philosophy"—an intellectual exercise held in great esteem in those days—before Mgr. Cospéan, Bishop of Lisieux, and several other prelates. His conspicuous success on this occasion was talked about in society, and led to his first introduction to the great world of Paris, and his entrance into the Hôtels de Nevers, de Senecey, de Choiseul, de Feuquières, and Rambouillet. A relation, François Bossuet, Secretary of the Council of Finance, introduced the young student to Mme. du Plessis Guénégaud, herself a de Choiseul, and wife of the *Secrétaire d'État*, whose house—"ce palais enchanté," Mme. de Sevigné called it[1]—was at that time the rendezvous of all the most brilliant society of the Court, whether as to rank, political position, or talent. Madame du Plessis was herself an ambitious woman, of intellectual capacity, and possessed the not ordinary gift of filling a great position nobly.[2] She

[1] *Lettres*, vol. i. p. 100.

[2] Mme. de Sevigné says of her, "Elle avait un grand esprit, de grandes vues, un grand art de posséder noblement une grande fortune."—vol. v. p. 353.

was the intimate friend of most of the eminent personages of her time, especially of the two ministers de Chavigni and Fouquet, and her influence was well and kindly used, so that, as Mme. de Sevigné says, when moralising over her death, "elle avait fait la fortune de bien des gens, la joie et le plaisir de bien d'autres." At this time Fouquet was in power (his disgrace was not till 1661), and many a literary man was introduced to his favour by Mme. du Plessis. At the Hôtel de Nevers Bossuet became acquainted with the Marquis de Feuquières, Governor of Verdun, who had formerly known his father. This nobleman often boasted of his young friend's talents and readiness at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, then so great a centre of the literary world of Paris. He went so far as to affirm his conviction that if the clever boy —already distinguished as an improvist among his companions—were to be given a subject, a few moments of recollection, unassisted by books or authorities, would enable him to pronounce a discourse on any topic selected. The novelty of such a proposition fell in with the bad taste and pretension of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.[1] De Feuquières sent off for Bossuet,

[1] "L'hôtel de Rambouillet, que le rang et la célébrité des personnages qui s'y réunissoient n'ont pu préserver entièrement d'une sorte de ridicule," says Cardinal de Bausset, "contribua cependant à répandre le goût des plaisirs de l'esprit et de l'instruction à la Cour et dans le monde. Il était naturel que l'affec-

who arrived in obedience to his summons about eleven at night. It is a curious episode and picture of the time,—the young theological student thus summarily fetched from his study, if not his bed, and bid to preach before a numerous assembly of the most fashionable and literary—albeit, we must honestly suppose, not the most pious world, upon a sacred subject, selected for him with no devout end, but simply as a literary or dramatic curiosity! However, Bossuet obeyed the call, and after retiring to collect his thoughts for a short time, he reappeared much sooner than was expected, and altogether took the critical Rambouillet circle by storm, preaching so as to exceed all that his patron had said, or his brilliant audience expected of him. Among the latter was Voiture,[1] whose *bon mot*, after looking at his watch and finding it to be midnight, that "he had never heard so early

tation et la recherche précédassent ce goût pur et sévère qui ne peut se former que par la comparaison des bons modèles. Mais le désir de se faire remarquer par une éducation plus cultivée annonçait déjà l'heureuse influence que l'instruction parée des grâces de l'esprit, devoit bientôt obtenir à la Cour, et le charme qu'elle pouvait ajouter à la politesse et â l'élégance des mœurs. Il est même permis de penser que la noblesse, la grâce et la décence, qui distinguèrent la Cour de Louis XIV. furent préparées par ce mélange d'esprit, d'instruction, et peut-être de pédanterie, que l'on reprochoit à quelques sociétés de Paris sous la régence d'Anne d'Autriche."—*Hist. de Bossuet*, vol. i. 32.

[1] Of whom Voltaire says, "C'est le premier qui fut en France ce qu'on appelle un bel esprit."—*Siècle de Louis XIV.* vol. i. 446.

or so late a sermon,"[1] together with the personal attractions, the real talent and fire of the young student, contributed to make Bossuet already famous. The Bishop of Lisieux repeated the experiment, this time, however, in a less unsuitable manner, as the youth was called to preach before a select audience of Bishops and other grave persons; and instead of a flood of exaggerated, unmeaning compliments, Mgr. Cospéan spoke kindly and helpfully to him afterwards, giving him much profitable advice, warning him against the danger of such premature success, and entreating him not to allow himself to be made a popular Parisian preacher, as some young men of the day had become, even before receiving Holy Orders (a proceeding which the venerable Prelate highly disapproved, even though an Olier or a Bouthillier de Rancé were in question), until he was "thoroughly furnished" with sound and substantial stores of theological study. Mgr. Cospéan cultivated Bossuet's friendship from this time, and de Rancé, the celebrated Trappist, used to tell how he had heard the Bishop say to a roomful of literary people, as Bossuet left it, "That young fellow will be one of the greatest lights of the Church hereafter."[2]

[1] "Qu'il n'avait jamais ouï prêcher, ni si tôt, ni si tard."—*Hist. de Bossuet*, i. 22; Floquet, i. 97.

[2] Floquet, i. p. 100.

In spite of his prudent theories, the Bishop of Lisieux could not resist making much of the young genius, and he wanted to present him to the Queen and let her hear him preach, but his day of Court favour was nearly over. He had been the friend of Richelieu, and Cardinal Mazarin was jealous of his influence with Anne of Austria; so the learned prelate received an intimation that he had better devote himself to the immediate care of his diocese, and retiring there, he died about three years afterwards.

Probably it was well for Bossuet that his nearer approach to the Court, where he was hereafter to play so important a part, was delayed till he was older. As it was, he continued studying diligently, becoming day by day a greater favourite with his venerable master, Dr. Cornet, who strained a point of etiquette on his behalf, and, fearful lest the rival Sorbonne should possess itself of his young disciple, admitted him among the *bacheliers* of the College, an honour never before conferred on any one until he had taken his degree in theology.

It was in January 1648 that Bossuet took this degree, and justified the exceptional favour accorded to him by the talent and power displayed in his "thèse de bachelier." The *éclat* of this oration was greatly enhanced by its being dedicated to and made in the presence of the Grand Condé, who attended

the ceremony, surrounded by the brilliant military suite and courtiers who gathered round the most celebrated soldier of his day.

A strange scene that was, as we look back upon it now! the young General—for Louis de Bourbon, first Prince of the blood, was at this time only twenty-seven, although it was already six years since Mazarin gave him the command of the French army in Flanders, and the "inexperienced youth of twenty-one, whom the Spaniards despised,"[1] had startled the world by winning the battles of Rocroy and Norlingue, and by taking Friburg, Dunkirk, etc.—a strange scene! this young General, laying aside for the moment his military pursuits, and assisting at the religious and literary battlefield—if we may so call it—of his younger contemporary, who was destined to fight as great battles in the Church militant as Condé in his department of the world's drama;—listening with an interest so intense to the discussion of Bossuet's religious and philosophical thesis, on the "Existence and Attributes of God, and the Immortality of the Soul," that he said afterwards he could scarcely withhold himself from rushing headlong into the discussion, and striving for laurels that were not military.[2] And then,—to look on from this day—of their first meeting, through a

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.* vol. i. p. 29.
[2] *Éloge de Bossuet*, Abbé de Choisy.

long and affectionate friendship, to years which then must have seemed so distant to both the young men;—years when both should have brought their equally brilliant, though strangely diverse, careers to a close; when once more, and for the last time, the eloquent voice of the younger should be raised in the presence of the elder, now, indeed, no longer present as an eager, excited listener, but as a still, silent corpse beneath the lofty catafalque, which almost reached the roof of Notre-Dame, on March 10, 1687, where "all that France contained that was august" gathered round to hear some of the grandest passages of eloquence that her great orator ever spoke, although, as he said himself, they were uttered "with the remnant of a failing voice and a sinking energy."[1]

The Grand Condé had come to the ceremony, partly as a compliment to the town of Dijon (being himself Governor of Burgundy), partly out of friendship for Claude Bossuet, and partly because, having been educated at the Jesuits' College at Bourges, where he studied his "humanities" with the same energy which afterwards made him foremost in the science of war and destruction, he had a real taste for the kind of thing; and the sympathies aroused toward Bossuet that day never failed. Condé is said to have wept

[1] "Les restes d'une voix qui tombe et d'une ardeur qui s'éteint." —*Oraison Funèbre du P. de Condé*, *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 639.

when reading Corneille's tragedies,—but sometimes he carried the tone of a victorious general even into his literary circles, it would seem, for Boileau used to say, "I can argue before the King, but I am silent before Condé!"[1]

From this time Bossuet's line as a speaker was decided, and his brethren of the Collége de Navarre lost no opportunity of sending their orator to the front. He was quite conscious himself of his vocation, and indeed friends and rivals kept the knowledge of his powers continually before him. He strove to cultivate these powers, and, among other means of so doing, he frequented the theatre, where Corneille then was the king of the drama (Racine and Molière came before the public at a somewhat later date). Bossuet used to talk of this in after years to his secretary, the Abbé Le Dieu, adding that he never had entered a theatre since his ordination. Bossuet's opinions as to the whole subject of the theatre took shape later on in a letter to a certain Theatine monk, the P. Caffaro, who in 1694 published a justification of theatrical representations, at the beginning of an edition of Boursault's "Comédies." The Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Harlay, and others, were scandalised at it, and Bossuet consented to reply, which he did,

[1] "Je garderai le silence devant Condé, mais je me défendrai devant le roi."—*Remarques Historiques*, vol. xii. p. 608.

both in the above-named letter, and in a small volume called "Maximes et Réflexions sur la Comédie."[1] They are not written with exaggeration or vehemence. "You can see," Bossuet says, "that there are things which, without any marked effects, nevertheless leave a lurking tendency to evil behind them in the soul, and are really noxious, although their malignity is not obtrusive. Whatever fosters the passions is of this kind."[2] In the "Maximes" Bossuet criticises the coarseness of Molière[3] with some severity, nor does Corneille altogether escape, in spite of early memories. Not that he for a moment accuses Corneille of a coarse or immoral tone; but he does say that both that poet and Racine put forward earthly passion, and its emotions, as the "one end of all their song," and that this is substituting the less for the greater love. He quotes Plato and Aristotle on his side of the question, as well as S. Thomas Aquinas, and numerous Fathers of the Church, whose words had been misapplied by P. Caffaro. Thus SS. Antoninus, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Basil and Augustine are all called in as witnesses, but it is noticeable that Bossuet does not cite Tertullian, whose memorable

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii. [2] *Ibid.* xxvii. 10.

[3] "Son jugement sur Molière restera une des taches, une des inintelligences comme des duretés de Bossuet."—SAINTE BEUVE, *N. Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 347.

treatise "De Spectaculis" is generally a stronghold to the opponents of the theatre.[1]

Through all this period of excitement and study, the devout mind seems to have been steadily growing within; and it is marvellous that so much applause and food for self-complacency, as was ministered to one so young and so enthusiastic, should not have had a more intoxicating effect. Perhaps the deep impression made on Bossuet's mind as he entered Paris helped to keep vividly before him how insecure and uncertain a thing all worldly success and greatness is! The very same day (October 17, 1642) on which Bossuet arrived, saw the entry of Cardinal Richelieu, once the proud imperious ruler of France, now carried in a litter, feeble, helpless, to die. Pomp there was in plenty to the last,—the litter in which the great Cardinal was borne was almost a room, admitting of a table at which a secretary sat ready to write at his master's dictation; and it was carried by a constant relay of eighteen of his Guards, bareheaded,—while the people flocked in such crowds to see the terrible

[1] Oxford trans. Tert. i. p. 187. "Why may not men be in danger of devils entering into them? for the case hath happened, the Lord is witness, of that woman who went to the theatre, and returned thence with a devil. Wherefore when the unclean spirit in the exorcism was hard pressed because he had dared to attack a believer, he boldly said, 'And most righteously I did it, for I found her in my own place.'"—p. 215. Bossuet quotes this passage in other works.

Minister who so lately had sacrificed the popular heroes Cinq Mars and de Thou to his vengeance,[1] that it was necessary to keep a passage for the lugubrious procession by the help of chains, as also perhaps to interpose some barrier between an excited people and the hated Minister. For a brief season the Cardinal seemed to rally, and much account was made of his entertaining Anne of Austria at a superb banquet in his Château de Ruel; but the cold hand of death was already grasping him, and would not let go. A little later and the solemn laying in state at the *Palais Cardinal*, and pompous burial, closed the earthly history of Richelieu. Bossuet was again a spectator of the translation of all that remained of the once terrible Prime Minister to the Church of the Sorbonne, and listened to the funeral oration pronounced in Notre-Dame by the (then so considered) great preacher, de Lingendes, Bishop of Sarlat, whose name was so soon to be effaced by his own; and his vivid imagination was keenly touched. But a little later, June 1643, and Bossuet, together with his fellow-students, assisted at the solemn service for Louis XIII., when Potier de Gesvres, Bishop of Beauvais, then all-powerful at Court, was celebrant, and within two short months he was in disgrace. All these things sunk deep into a thoughtful as well as impressionable

[1] September 12, 1642.

mind, and it was therefore without regret that, when his student's career ended, he left Paris and went to Metz, where ecclesiastical duties already bound him. According to the custom of that day, Bossuet had received the tonsure when only eight years old; and according to another custom, or rather abuse, he had been nominated at the age of thirteen to a Canonry in the Cathedral of Metz, through the interest which his father possessed as President of the Parliament of that city. Of course he was incompetent to fulfil the duties of his office until ordained, but he seems to have felt that the next best thing was to live on the spot during all his vacations, and by his unfailing regularity in attending all the services of the Cathedral, to give an earnest of his future devotion to his work. The time thus spent at Metz was that freest from distraction in all his life, Bossuet said in later years, and one in which he studied most usefully. He returned to the Collége de Navarre in time to be shut in with his comrades during the blockade of Paris by his noble friend, the Grand Condé, in the early days of the Fronde (1649), when, being chosen Bursar of the College, he slept with sacks of flour, etc., under his bed, as their safest keeping, for a considerable time.[1] These were strange times. Anne of Austria, insulted by the people, accused of sacrificing France to Car-

[1] Abbé Le Dieu.

dinal Mazarin, and scared by the hideous scenes which had been enacted in England, whence her sister-in-law, the unhappy Henrietta Maria, had fled for shelter to Paris,—fled in her turn to Saint-Germain, and appealed pathetically to Condé to protect his young king, Louis XIV.; and the conqueror of Rocroy undertook to defend the Court against the Parliament, headed by the Prince de Conti, his deformed brother, the Duc de Beaufort· Vendôme, de Longueville, de Bouillon, and the Coadjutor de Retz. The license and disorder within Paris exceeded all description. When the Archbishop of Paris took his seat in Parliament with a dagger protruding from his pocket, there was a cry, "See our Archbishop's breviary!" There seemed no respect for God or man in any one, and Condé himself, after bringing the Royal party triumphantly back to Paris, turned round upon the Queen and Mazarin, and took the other side.

His vanity was wounded at being refused some unimportant promotion for a follower, and his sister, the beautiful, profligate Duchesse de Longueville, induced him to join the rebel party. Soon after arrested and thrown into Vincennes with Conti and the Duc de Longueville, Condé spent thirteen months in captivity, a season of which he said in later years, "I went in the most innocent of men—I came out the most guilty." One's head grows dizzy among the

changes and counterplots which followed—Condé and Turenne fighting now for, now against, France or one another,—orders, treaties, agreements, and differences crossing one another in every direction,—those who were friends one week sworn foes the next,—Cardinal Mazarin and Cardinal de Retz reviled, mocked, disgraced, according to the party in the ascendant; anything more hopeless or more disreputable than the whole state of things can hardly be described or imagined. Yet it was amid such external conditions that Bossuet's youth was passed, associating chiefly with Dr. Cornet, the Abbé de Launoy, and other learned men; making his Sorbonne oration ("*Sorbonique*"), and at the close of his term selected to pronounce the *Paranymphe*, a formal, and, as it seems now, uninteresting Latin discourse required by the Faculties of Theology and Medicine each term. Bossuet made this oration less meaningless than its wont by taking as his subject, "Fear God, honour the king;" and treating it with reference to the disgraceful and unhappy state of France at the time. Bossuet's name stood second on the Class List[1]—the first place was filled by the Abbé de Rancé, of la Trappe celebrity. The two young men were intimate in these

[1] So says Cardinal de Bausset:—Floquet says however that he was third only, and that the Prieur de Sorbonne, Gaston Chamillart, was second.—Vol. i. p. 160.

student days, and then fell widely asunder, de Rancé plunging vehemently into the pleasures and vices of the world, while Bossuet pursued his devout, studious life. Once again they drew together, when Bossuet had become one of the most conspicuous features of the brilliant period of Louis XIV., and de Rancé, saddened and penitent, had withdrawn from his life of profligacy to the silence of la Trappe, and it was there that the two friends met again. Sundry of Bossuet's letters to his old friend are extant, and frequent reference is made in them to visits paid by the Bishop to the solitary. "For the last ten years I have wished," he writes, "to spend some time in prayer with you. I shall make my journey most discreetly,—no one but the King need know of it. My heart rejoices in the thought of fulfilling this plan—I trust you will approve it."[1] And again—"I am afraid I shall be deprived this year of the comfort I was looking to; . . . but if I cannot come and pray with you, do you at all events pray for me."[2] A frequent correspondence was kept up, and Bossuet often, during the most intellectually active years of his life, expresses the satisfaction and consolation he derived from it;[3] although, while profiting by the Abbot's advice and opinions, the Bishop of Meaux held his own in a very

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 278. [2] *Ibid.* p. 283.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 344, 452, etc.

characteristic fashion. Thus he writes concerning one of his Clergy who was going to visit de Rancé:—

"He is one of the best among the Clergy of this diocese, perhaps one of the best priests one ever came across. He has a passionate desire to communicate with you, and even some notions of retreat, into which I do not enter, for I am convinced that good priests such as he is can do nothing better than serve in our Church militant, and die in the breach."[1]

Bossuet had read very hard during this time of preparation for his degree; and had devoted much pains and labour to a profound study of the very foundations of theology, the discipline and mind of the Church as set forth in her early Councils and in the patristic writings. He considered S. Chrysostom to be the master of all pulpit eloquence, the greatest preacher of the Church, and next to him Origen;[2] but of all the Fathers Bossuet drank deepest of S. Augustine,[3] saying that it was

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 394. [2] Abbé Le Dieu.

[3] Writing later (in 1669), on behalf of Cardinal de Bouillon, as to the studies best calculated to form an orator, Bossuet said: "As to the Fathers, I should bracket S. Augustine and S. Chrysostom. One lifts up the mind to the greatest and most subtle considerations, while the other brings it down to the capacity of the masses. Taken alone, the first might perhaps form somewhat too abstract a style,—the latter one too simple and popular. Not that either himself errs in this way, but we are apt to exaggerate the leading features of our model authors. You will find all that concerns doctrine in S. Augustine, and in S. Chry-

from him above all others that the very first and fundamental principles of theology were to be gathered. So continuous and diligent was his study of S. Augustine, and so copious the extracts he made from his works, that his secretary declared he had fairly dissected the great Bishop of Hippo.[1] He possessed a small octavo edition of S. Augustine, and many volumes, especially the "City of God," and the "Commentaries on the Psalms," were quite covered with Bossuet's notes,—he carried them about with him, and was perpetually referring to them. Later on he kept a complete edition in each place where he lived,—the first he ever read was left in Paris, well filled with MS. notes, and the large Benedictine edition which remained at Meaux, and which was the Bishop's favourite, was marked in every direction.

"Bossuet was so penetrated with the spirit of S. Augustine," says a biographer, "so attached to his principles, that he proved every doctrine, taught every lesson, and answered every difficulty from his works, and found therein whatever was needful for the defence of the faith or confirming of practice. When

sostom a model of vigorous exhortation, of the best treatment of Holy Scripture, and of bringing out all its expressions and details."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 112. Bossuetgoes on to speak of other Fathers and their special qualifications

1 "Il avoit mis, pour ainsi dire, en morceaux, Saint Augustin tout entier."

preparing to preach, he required no books save the Bible and S. Augustine. If he was called on to refute an error, or establish a truth, he would read S. Augustine;—you might see him rapidly reviewing such of his works as met the subject in question. With a glance he would gather up what he wanted—guided by his own marginal notes and pencil marks, which readily brought to his mind the thoughts suggested by his previous close and diligent study of that Father. . . . He had so completely identified himself with S. Augustine,—his style, his views, his very expressions,—that he was able to supply a missing passage of eight lines in the 199th Sermon of the Benedictine edition."[1] But Bossuet by no means limited his patristic studies to these favourite authors. S. Athanasius, S. Gregory Nazianzen, Tertullian, S. Bernard,—all were read with the same vigorous attention, by which Bossuet contrived to make the stores of other men's minds his own. He left two manuscripts upon the study of theology, which are simply exhaustive,—perhaps one might be excused for saying, exhausting too to contemplate to those whose mental digestion is not capable of swallowing and assimilating such vast stores as Bossuet possessed. But he considered no toil too great, no details too minute, where the study of sacred things

[1] De Bausset, vol. i. p. 81.

was concerned, and the natural largeness and breadth of his heart and mind made him shrink from an imperfect knowledge of any subject of importance, especially in religion, believing, as he rightly did, that nothing so narrows and fetters the judgment as a superficial or one-sided acquaintance with any subject. Such narrowness,—often the peculiar peril of theologians,—Bossuet avoided more than most men,[1] even through the endless controversies in which, as years went on, he found himself unavoidably entangled; and probably one secret of Bossuet's great intellectual power, and the influence that he has wielded over the world's mind, is to be found in his singular capacity for taking a comprehensive view of whatever subject he treats of. Even as a young student he always endeavoured to enter upon whatever subject he had in hand from a sufficiently elevated point of view to admit of seeing all its bearings, not merely, as we are all so apt to do, those which fit in with our own preconceived opinions. After having grasped this larger conception, Bossuet was ready to come down to the most minute and investigatory study, and by this way of treating subjects he escaped the illiberality which even deep and accurate study does not escape when made with a preconceived party spirit as its *motor*.

Such was Bossuet when—May 18th, 1652—he took

[1] His treatment of Fénelon must be excepted, unhappily.

his Doctor's degree, a solemn ceremony, begun in the Archbishop's chapel and completed in the metropolitan Church of Notre-Dame, for which he made a solemn and religious preparation, as one of the most important events of his life, looking upon it as the pledge of his future entire devotion to the defence of religion and truth. More than fifty-one years afterwards, when his secretary, the Abbé Le Dieu, expressed his regret that all Bossuet's Latin discourses had been lost—that spoken before the Chancellor of the University on the occasion of taking his Doctor's degree included—to his great astonishment the Bishop, who was walking up and down the room, began to repeat the Latin speech, of which he had kept no copy, and which now Le Dieu carefully noted down from his own lips. "Ibo, te duce, lætus ad sanctas illas aras, testes fidei doctoralis, quæ majores nostros toties audierunt; ibi exiges a me pulcherrimum illud sanctissimumque jusjurandum, quo caput hoc meum adducam neci propter Christum, meque integrum devovebo veritati. O vocem, non jam doctoris, sed martyris! nisi forte ea est convenientior doctori, quo magis martyrem decet. Quid enim doctor; nisi testis veritatis? Quamobrem, O summa paterno in sinu concepta Veritas, quæ elapsa in terras te ipsam nobis in Scripturis tradidisti, tibi nos totos obstringimus, tibi dedicatum imus, quidquid in nobis spirat; intellecturi posthac quam nihil

debeant sudoribus parcere quos etiam sanguinis prodigos esse oporteat."[1]

From time to time Bossuet had visited Metz, and just about the period when he took his degree he was appointed Archdeacon of Metz, under the name of Archdeacon of Sarrebourg. Among the closest and best of his friends at this time were the Marshal de Schomberg and his wife, who lived chiefly at Metz. The latter had been well known at Court as Mademoiselle de Hautefort, a favourite lady-in-waiting of Anne of Austria; but the Queen had sacrificed her to Cardinal Mazarin's jealousy, and she was living in retirement when Marshal Schomberg sought and won her. Both husband and wife were earnestly religious as well as talented people, and their house at Metz became the gathering-place of all whose intellectual or spiritual gifts were used to God's Glory. Such were ever welcome guests, and naturally Bossuet

[1] Freely translated as: "I go, led by thee, joyfully to the holy altars, so often witness to the faith sworn by our saintly predecessors. There you will require of me that noble and sacred oath, which is to consecrate me to death for Christ, my whole life to truth. An utterance, worthy rather of a martyr than of a doctor, unless indeed it be the fitter for a doctor, forasmuch as it teaches a martyr's faith. For what is a doctor, but the witness of truth? Even so, O Sovereign Truth, Who didst come down to earth, and give Thyself to us as the Divine Word, we bind ourselves to Thee; we consecrate every breath we draw to Thee, nor will we withhold from Thee the sweat of our brow, to Whom we have devoted our very blood."—*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 43.

became intimate in that circle. In after years he never passed through Nanteuil, where the Schombergs were buried, without visiting their grave and praying beside it.

Bossuet had received Deacon's Orders, September 21, 1649, in the Cathedral of Metz, at the hands of Bishop Bédacier, Suffragan of Metz, and Bishop of Augustopolis *in partibus infidelibus;* and it was in the Ember Week of Lent 1652 that he received Priest's Orders, in preparation for which he went into retreat at Saint-Lazare, under the direction of S. Vincent de Paul. It was now twenty-one years since the invaluable institution of Ordinand's Retreats was set to work, through the immediate intervention of Bishop Potier of Beauvais and Vincent de Paul.[1] The ignorance, the unspirituality,—nay, worse, the too often utterly irregular and profligate lives of the Clergy, were a perpetual source of mourning to that good Bishop, who had seen a good deal of them, and was most fully alive to the crying evils under which the Church laboured. Intimate with Père Bourdoise (whose attention had been specially turned to the same subject) and with Vincent de Paul, Bishop Potier used to discuss it continually with both these holy men. One day, when he was pressing the topic more earnestly even than his wont, and beseeching Vincent

[1] *Vie de Saint Vincent de Paul*, Maynard, vol. ii. p. 24.

to suggest a remedy, the latter replied that it was of no avail to stop anywhere short of the real source of the evil; that he looked upon it as hopeless to attempt to convert ecclesiastics who were already hardened in their bad ways, inasmuch as a bad priest is rarely converted; but that it was among those who were preparing to enter the ranks of the priesthood that the reformation of the Clergy must be begun. To this end he counselled Bishop Potier to admit none to Holy Orders who did not on examination prove to be sufficiently taught, or who lacked signs of true vocation, and for those who were thus qualified he recommended the longest practicable preparation to fit them for their sacred duties.

Bishop Potier thoroughly appreciated the wisdom of this advice,—but how was it to be carried out in those days when there were no training Colleges, no Seminaries? Some time afterwards, the Bishop and Vincent de Paul were travelling together in the same carriage, and as usual they got talking upon this ever-recurring subject. After a while Bishop Potier shut his eyes, and remained as though sleeping. "I am not asleep," he said soon, turning round to his companion;—"I am only pondering deeply how best to prepare our young Clergy for Holy Orders; and for the present I can see nothing better to do than to receive them for a few days myself, and have them

carefully taught concerning the duties and graces which specially concern them." This solution of the difficulty was discussed until the friends parted, and then, the Bishop of Beauvais undertaking to make all necessary arrangements, he asked Vincent to write down a plan for such a retreat, and the course of subjects suitable for it, adding that he must come to Beauvais a fortnight before the next Ordination and give it himself. Vincent promised; and at the next Embertide he, together with Dr. Duchesne and Mesnier, went to Beauvais to meet the Ordinands. Bishop Potier himself took part in the spiritual exercises which were planned and directed by Vincent de Paul, and this first Ordination Retreat became the type of all that followed. Some two years later the then Archbishop of Paris—Mgr. Gondi—hearing much from Bishop Potier of the invaluable gain to the Ordinands of this plan, and being much pressed both by him and by the P. Bourdoise,—resolved that all his candidates should prepare for ordination by a ten days' retreat; and he asked Vincent de Paul to receive them.[1] At first the Founder of the Lazarists refused, but he shortly yielded, and from that time every Embertide brought him in this great increase of toil and expense to his struggling Community. A few years later, the privilege was accorded, not to the

[1] *Vie S. V. de Paul*, Maynard, vol. ii. p. 25.

Diocese of Paris only, but to all French Ordinands, and sometimes more than a hundred flocked in to Saint-Lazare at each of the Ember seasons. Every detail of their reception and treatment was ordered by Vincent himself. The Ordinands, as they arrived, were met and welcomed by the Lazarist Fathers, who attended carefully to all their material wants, and arranged all ordinary matters, so that those preparing for Holy Orders should have no trouble or interruption, but give themselves entirely to their sacred duties. Two instructions—"*entretiens*" as they were called—were given daily to the Ordinands; that in the morning turning generally on the right administration of the Sacraments, ecclesiastical law in its bearing on the Priest's duties, the Decalogue and the Creed;—the evening instructions were devoted to such subjects as vocation, mental prayer, Orders,—their requirements and obligations, the spirit in which they ought to be received, and the duties of Priests when in their church work. After the *entretien*, the Ordinands were divided into sections, or classes of twelve or fifteen each, and a Mission priest discussed the instruction with them, questioning them, answering their questions, drawing them out, and encouraging them to discuss the subject in hand together. Certain hours were set apart for Offices and meditation, and the Ordinands were exercised in saying services and such

other of their future functions as were practicable. They were also invited to use the opportunity for making a general confession before their Ordination. S. Vincent himself took an active share in all this preparation, in which also his Lazarist Fathers were assisted by such external help as he could obtain, and many eminent scholars and Bishops were glad to give their assistance. Whoever undertook to do this was bound to keep to the extremely simple system set forward by Vincent, and if any one departed from the programme supplied, the venerable Lazarist never failed to recall him to his point with straightforward simplicity. In later days Bossuet repaid the benefit he had himself gained at Saint-Lazare when an Ordinand by giving the Ordination Retreat on four different occasions. It was a work which S. Vincent prized very highly. "To take any part in making a good priest, however secondary an instrument one may be" (he says), "is to imitate the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who during His earthly sojourn trained His Apostles. . . . Making good priests is a *chef-d'œuvre* than which nothing is greater or more important. What is so weighty as the priest's office? . . . And such as the priests, such will the people be. We attribute the success or failure of our armies to the capacity of our officers; and in like manner we may be sure that if the ministers of the Church are capable, and do their

duty, all will go well, but if not, they are the cause of all our calamities. . . . It is the idle, the inactive, the profligate priest who damages the Church beyond all else."

At the Ember seasons, S. Vincent was wont to go about asking prayers for the Ordinands, and that God would raise up good Priests for His service, from every side—religious houses, his Lazarist Fathers, the Dames de la Charité who worked for him, and from all pious persons of his acquaintance. The humbler those who offered the prayer the better S. Vincent was pleased. "It may be," he used to say, "that if God brings forth some good fruit from this Retreat that it is in answer to the prayers of some humble lay brother who has never been near *Messieurs les Ordinands*. He has been going on with his usual work, often the while lifting up his heart to God in prayer that He would bless the Ordination, and it may be that while he thinks nought of his poor prayers, God grants them, because he is lowly and pure of heart."

Earnest as S. Vincent was in preaching humility to the Ordinands under his guidance, his example was the most eloquent instruction,—no service was too lowly for him to render to them personally, no want too trivial to meet his sympathy; he was even found cleaning the shoes of one Ordinand who had been neglected by the person whose business it was to

render this office. He looked to "the preaching of a good example, the most eloquent and efficacious of all sermons,"[1] as the chief source of success in these Ordination exercises. "What the eye sees reaches the heart far better than what the ear hears," he used to say, "and we believe much more truly in the good we see than what we only hear of. The faith enters by hearing—*fides ex auditu;* nevertheless we are infinitely more impressed by the virtues we see practised than by those we are taught." In this same spirit, Vincent de Paul insisted upon great attention to external order and reverence, both among the members of his Community and the Clergy who came under his teaching. He could not tolerate any carelessness or slovenliness, not to say irreverence, in the service of God, and never failed to notice anything which savoured thereof. "Granted," he used to say, "that these things are but the shadow, nevertheless they are the shadow of great realities, which demand to be fulfilled with the utmost possible attention,—with all present recollection and soberness of manner. If these men who come among us to learn do not see us performing our duties thoroughly and well, how are they likely to perform them?"

Among the numerous ecclesiastics who thronged to Saint-Lazare, there were many, if not Bossuet's intel-

[1] *Vie S. V. de Paul*, ii. 38.

lectual equals, at least men of his stamp, who came, not to increase their stores of learning or eloquence, but to steep their souls in the devotional spirit which S. Vincent breathed around him. And he felt that it was through the devotional character, not the intellectual quality of the exercises given, that such men must be reached and influenced. "They are not to be won," he used to say, "by science, or by the fine things we can say to them. They know more than we do; men who have taken their degrees in theology or law, well read in philosophy, as are many of them. Nothing that they can hear with us is new to them. They say honestly that it is not through such things that they are touched, but by the holiness of life set before them."

Such was the character of the Retreat by which Bossuet prepared himself for the Priesthood. It appears to have been the first meeting between him and S. Vincent de Paul, although the latter had heard of him, and of the Bishop of Lisieux's prediction concerning his future usefulness to the Church. Another eminent servant of God, the Père Le Quieu, a well-known Dominican, had in like manner been forcibly impressed by Bossuet, and had expressed his conviction of his future importance in the Church. One day, taking both the young Deacon's hands in his, the venerable Dominican's eyes filled with tears, as he

said, "I foresee that you are destined to do a great work, and to do it without knowing your work."[1] The two men drew together with the force of remarkable, though diverse, minds, and formed a friendship which was to last for ever. Vincent de Paul's quick perceptions and experience in reading character showed him speedily with what a remarkable man he was dealing; and still more than by Bossuet's talents, the Founder of the Lazarists was attracted by his simplicity of heart, while, on the other hand, it was the very same quality—the extreme simplicity of the venerable S. Vincent, which won Bossuet's special love and admiration. We have his own testimony to this in his letter, written August 2, 1702 (fifty years after his first acquaintance with S. Vincent, and when the writer himself was an old man, close upon the end of his career), to Pope Clement XI.,[2] in which

[1] The good Father lived to see his prediction fulfilled, and that Bossuet was much impressed by it is shown by his allusion to the subject in a letter, dated January 15, 1693, to one of his spiritual children, Madame d'Albert, in which he says:—"Je vous dirai une parole qu'un religieux très saint, très humble et très penitent, de l'ordre de Saint Dominique, me dit une fois avant que je fusse évêque: Que Dieu m'avoit destiné à avoir part à beaucoup de bien sans que je le susse. Sans examiner par quel esprit il parloit, je vous avoue que j'ai toujours été fort touché de cette manière de coopérer aux desseins de Dieu, et que je souhaite une pareille grace à ceux que j'aime."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 108.

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii. p. 275.

he describes himself as "full of gratitude to his memory," and speaks of the impression of true Christian piety and real ecclesiastical discipline made upon him in his youth by Vincent. Probably much of the instruction conveyed to him in this Ordination Retreat came directly from the Founder himself, but with his usual humility Vincent judged another more capable of dealing with one whom he already acknowledged as a great soul, than he was himself, and he assigned the Abbé Le Prêtre as Bossuet's special guide and director for the occasion. The Abbé Le Prêtre was not the most learned, but one of the simplest-minded of all the Lazarist Fathers, and the one whom Vincent had selected as his own director.[1] During the remainder of Vincent's life Bossuet sought every opportunity of being with him, and benefiting by his counsels. In 1654 he joined his Society called "la Conférence des Mardis," the object of which was to preserve and strengthen the good impressions and holiness of life begun in Ordination Retreats,[2] and this company supplied a valuable body of Missioners, of whose services Bossuet availed himself a little later in Metz.

Having received Priest's Orders, Bossuet determined to go at once to Metz, and devote himself to his duties

[1] *Vie S. V. de Paul*, ii. 45.

[2] *Ibid. Les Conférences Ecclésiastiques*, pp. 51-76.

there rather than yield to the temptations set before him to remain in Paris, and accept the offers the world held out to him. It is difficult to look at his determination correctly save through the genius of the times in which he lived—the secular, worldly spirit which had long possessed the Church; the unblushing way in which honours and riches were sought and grasped by Churchmen; the high esteem in which courtly favour, public applause, and literary reputation were held, and the unscrupulous manner in which the grossest neglect of duty was winked at by those whose office it was to maintain order and regularity in the Church. Bossuet had, as it has been said, been appointed to the Archdeaconry of Metz shortly before he received Priest's Orders, and this appointment was made by Henri de Bourbon, the Duc de Verneuil, a natural son of Henri IV. and Mme. de Verneuil, who had been titular Bishop of Metz by papal dispensation ever since he was six years old, although he never attempted to receive Holy Orders; and who continued to draw the revenues of the See, and to exercise jurisdiction over it, for fifty years, until at last his marriage with the Duc de Sully's widow—Charlotte Seguier—constrained him to resign his sacrilegious dignity.[1] This "phantom Bishop," as Floquet calls him, never

[1] *Vie*, De Bausset, i. 59; Floquet, i. 210. *Vie S. V. de Paul*, ii. 83.

even saw his diocese of Metz, but lived at Paris or Verneuil, given up to hunting and free living, which, with a taste for pictures, were his chief objects in life. But all the same he liked to exercise his prerogatives, among others that of coining money, and various coins with his effigy and arms as Bishop of Metz yet remain. A succession of suffragans had performed certain indispensable episcopal functions at Metz, but a dreary interval of five years of neglect had occurred, until, in 1649, the Prior of Marmoutier, Pierre Bédacier—once of Cluny—was consecrated at Saint-Germain des Prés, under the title of Bishop of Augustopolis, and went to administer the deserted diocese. In 1652, as has been said, Henri de Bourbon resigned his ecclesiastical position to Cardinal Mazarin, who for a time was nominal Bishop of Metz. But all manner of internal quarrels and difficulties complicated the whole affair, and nothing more disgraceful or pitiable can well be imagined than the state of the See. The condition of neglect and spiritual abandonment in which the unfortunate diocese lay was perhaps not to be called unequalled at that period, but it was enough to rouse the energies and conscientious ardour of such a man as Bossuet, fresh from the spiritual manipulation of S. Vincent de Paul, and to give him resolution to turn from the brilliant position which was his alternative. Strikingly handsome (even

his portrait as an old man by Rigaud,[1] to be seen in the Louvre, a standing full-length in episcopal robes, shows that), and with the additional advantages of a dignified, graceful carriage and manner; brilliant in conversation, enjoying a great name for scholarship and intellectual power, not only in the schools, but amid the fine world of Paris—a world which prized that reputation highly, whether or no it really appreciated the depths of such powers; the friend and associate of all the wits and literary men of the day; every house which aimed at any literary distinction in the fashionable world seeking to attract the gifted young ecclesiastic, whose own relations held a respectable place in that world;[2] there was everything to allure him to remain in Paris; while another train of motives set before him on the same side might have served to stifle the remonstrances of conscience, if Bossuet had sought to have it so. This was to be found in the earnest desires of his revered

[1] "Ce Jeudi, 3 Nov. 1701: M. Hyacinthe Rigaud, peintre du roi, a commencé à Germigny un nouveau portrait de M. de Meaux, dans le dessein de faire un grand tableau en pied, revêtu de l'habit d'église d'hiver," etc. etc.—LE DIEU, vol. ii. p. 245.

[2] François Bossuet was *Secrétaire du Conseil des finances*, a very wealthy man, at whose house all the Court and fine world assembled. His daughters—the Marquise de Fercourt and the Comtesse de Pont-Chavigny—were considered two among the best "*partis*" of the day.

master, Dr. Cornet, whose great ambition was to restore his Collége de Navarre to the important position it deserved as the most ancient of the University of Paris.[1]

Cardinal Mazarin, its Visitor, was induced to imitate the example of his predecessor Richelieu, who had won, as he hoped, a lasting crown as restorer of the Sorbonne, on which building he spent a vast sum; and accordingly the powerful Minister undertook the work pressed upon him by Cornet. He was, however, less successful in his endeavour to induce Bossuet to become *Grand Maître* of the restored Collége, an office which Cornet proposed to resign in his favour. His former pupil remained firm in his resolution to devote himself to his work, and Dr. Cornet, disappointed and disheartened, lost his ardour, and did not follow up his cause with the Cardinal, who eventually transferred his intent to founding the Collége Mazarin instead of adding to the dignity of the Collége de Navarre.

And so Bossuet went to Metz, where he devoted himself to his work as Canon and Archdeacon (he had been appointed *Grand-Archidiacre* shortly before his ordination by Henri de Bourbon) as earnestly as if he had never tasted the sweetness of Parisian life and the *crême de la crême* of its society. He laid down to

[1] It was founded by Queen Jeanne, wife of Philippe le Bel.

himself as a first rule, an exact and invariable attention to all the public offices of his Cathedral, with which nothing was allowed to interfere,—not even the plausible pretext of other important work, or the deep and engrossing study in which the Archdeacon was engaged during all the years of his residence at Metz. A further rule from which he never departed, and which in after life he pressed earnestly in words as well as in example upon all the clergy over whom he presided, was, that he would take his part in every office or ceremony with the utmost perfection to which he could attain, always studying their form, spirit and ritual diligently,[1] and performing each act, saying each office, as a distinct sacrifice to God, in which carelessness or a perfunctory mind was sacrilegious. The Clergy of Metz Cathedral were greatly impressed, not merely by the punctuality and reverence with which he attended all appointed offices, whether those of day or night, but by the evident pleasure which he took in what was too often considered a merely perfunctory duty. They frequently noticed the serene expression of perfect gladness which used to beam from his countenance as he joined in the services of the Church with his clear ringing voice, and his visible realisation of the Sursum Corda helped to lift up many another heart. Bossuet does not seem to have been of a

[1] *Mémoires de l'Abbé Le Dieu*, vol. i. p. 29.

ritualistic turn of mind. Although remarkably dignified (it was natural to him, and he did everything in ordinary life with dignity) in his public ministrations, in which he was habitually so absorbed as both to lose all vestige of self-consciousness and to impress bystanders with a deep sense of solemnity;—his secretary and constant companion, the Abbé Le Dieu, describes him as "simple comme un enfant du peuple" in his tastes concerning religious ceremonial and pomp. "All was grand and serious in him," says Cardinal de Bausset. "Nourished as he had been by the Gospel, and brought up in the school of the Primitive Fathers, whose wisdom and learning he had so largely made his own, he held, as they did, that the Apostles were the authors of all the venerable institutions of the Church, and he desired to be faithful to all traditions of discipline or practice which could be traced to them. This spirit of primitive antiquity made him look with an unfavourable eye on all that did not bear its stamp, and he always rejected mere novelties either of practice or discipline, even when their alleged object was the pious one of exciting or sustaining popular devotion."[1]

From the beginning of his priestly career to the end of his long episcopate, Bossuet never omitted celebrating himself, unless imperatively hindered, on all Sundays and Saints' Days, through the octaves of all

[1] *Hist.* i. 60.

the great festivals, through Lent, and on all fast days, and this wherever he might chance to be. His voice, when chanting the offices, is said to have been sweet and sonorous, but at the same time firm and impressive, and, it is added, remarkably free from affectation.

During the six years of his residence at Metz, Bossuet lived a most retired life, mixing little in society. His moments of relaxation were chiefly spent with his sisters, Marie, Madame Chasot, and Madeleine, then living with the Chasots, who later married M. Foucault, a *Secrétaire du Conseil d'État*, and being left a widow in 1691, was a very frequent inmate of Bossuet's house. Mme. Chasot, who lived to a great age, used to tell how, as soon as the evening bells of Saint Étienne began to ring, her brother would break off his conversation, and go away with an affectionate smile, saying, "Je m'en vais à matines." Next to his sisters, the Schombergs were Bossuet's most intimate friends, and his first sermon in Metz was preached, Sept. 8, 1652, in their presence. The rest of his time was spent either in attending to the many duties of his office, in the Cathedral, or in his library, adding to the large stores he had already acquired by an almost exhaustive study of tradition and history. How devoted a student of Holy Scripture he had always been has been already mentioned, as also of the Fathers,

who are freely quoted throughout his voluminous writings and sermons, as by one thoroughly familiar with them, and whose mind and thoughts were moulded on theirs; and although classical allusions and quotations are numerous in his works, they are probably less so than in most authors of his time.[1] Like S. Francis de Sales, he discontinued the habit of "stuffing a sermon full of Latin and Greek," by which discontinuance the saint of Annecy so grievously afflicted his venerable father! We do not hear much of Bossuet's public preaching at this time, though he seems often to have preached to the Schomberg household, which was very numerous, and which he instructed carefully.

It was at this time, however, that Bossuet entered upon the controversial career, which was, in the order of God's Providence, to occupy so large a portion of his long life. Protestantism just then was not thriving

1 The Abbé Vaillant, who has written an able series of *Études* on Bossuet's sermons, says, "Il lui était difficile de se soustraire entièrement, dans sa jeunesse, aux influences de la prédication contemporaine. La chaire disputait alors d'érudition avec l'école; les prédicateurs déshonoraient la majesté de la parole sainte en y mêlant, à tout propos, les sentences des auteurs grecs et latins. Bossuet, dans ses premiers essais n'est pas entièrement exempt de ce défaut, on y remarque des citations des textes grecs, des théories philosophiques un peu abstraites et trop longuement développées. Plus tard, il semble négliger ces témoignages étrangers, et se contenter de ceux que lui fournissent l'Écriture et les Pères. Il abrége les discussions de la scholastique, ou du moins il les revêt d'une forme oratoire."—p. 34.

in France, politically at all events, and Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin were both anxious to see the Catholic Faith regain its hold over the people who had wandered astray; and they conceived that now, while depressed and weak, it would be easier than before to win them back by persuasion and instructions calculated to disperse prejudice.

Pierre de Bédacier, Bishop of Augustopolis, had a high opinion of the Archdeacon's powers and judgment, and he was anxious that he should use them on behalf of the Protestants, who were numerous in Metz. Bossuet's naturally courteous and kindly manners caused him to be on an altogether friendly footing with his Protestant concitoyens, and those who met him (the de Schombergs appear often to have brought the more enlightened into contact with him) frequently talked over their religious positions and opinions with him. Their chief minister was a certain Paul Ferry, a man of superior acquirement and general cultivation, whose purity of life and gentleness of manner had gained him friends on all sides. Having much in common with Bossuet, they soon became intimate, and while differing widely in opinions, they valued and admired each the other. Bossuet was at this time tender and courteous in controversy as in society:—he had learnt in the school of S. Augustine to show gentleness and consideration to those he sought to convince, and, as he

was wont to say, "it is hard enough to people to be shown that they are wrong, especially in matters of religion, without adding unnecessarily to their discomfort."[1] Unhappily, in later years, when involved in his bitter controversy with Fénelon, Bossuet forgot these principles of his earlier days.

But when Paul Ferry published a work, in the form of a Catechism, wherein he not only stated that the Reformation was a necessity, but that whereas before it men could be saved in the Church of Rome, they now could not be so saved, Bossuet felt that it behoved him to answer his friend; and this led to the publication of his first work in 1655, entitled "Réfutation du Catéchisme de Ferry," and dedicated to the Marshal de Schomberg. In the Advertisement to it, Bossuet says, "I entreat our adversaries to read this work in a kindly spirit. . . . I hope that it will testify that I speak against their doctrines without the least personal bitterness; and that, over and above our common nature, I know how to reverence in them the Baptism of Jesus

[1] "Dieu ne veut pas être servi par de mauvaises voies," he said—it is a Protestant, Maimbourg, who records the words.—"En toutes sortes de négociations, mais particulièrement en celle-ci, il faut poser pour un fondement inébranlable la sincerité et la droiture. Si je reconnaissois qu'on ne procédât pas de bonne foi, aucune considération ne me pourroit empêcher de me retirer de la chose, et d'en avertir mes amis."—FLOQUET, vol. iii. p. 71.

Christ, which is not effaced by their errors."[1] The opening pages of this work dwell upon the great need for brotherly love and charity; and the writer's real aim evidently was to make no breach thereof while refuting the errors in question. But, nevertheless, he answers what he holds to be unjust accusations resolutely and clearly. Thus, in reply to the assertion that Catholics added other mediators to the One Only Mediator, "des adjoints à Jésus Christ en la rédemption;"—"Does not *le Sieur* Ferry know in his conscience," he asks, "that we confess Jesus Christ as the sole Saviour and only Redeemer of our souls; that we believe Him to have more than sufficiently paid our debt to His justly offended Father; and that, so far from questioning whether His Death is all-sufficient to our salvation, we teach that one drop of His Precious Blood, even one tear or sigh, would suffice to redeem countless worlds?"[2]

Already, in this his first published work, Bossuet touches the point of infallibility, concerning which he was later to pronounce such weighty judgments—judgments so unlike the recently-affirmed dogma of Infallibility. "We only respect his (the Pope's) authority because we are convinced that Jesus Christ, our Master, intrusted it to him, under strict obligation

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xiii. p. 353.

[2] *Réfut. Œuvres*, vol. xiii. p. 358.

to render account to Himself of its administration. . . . We believe that Jesus has not forsaken His Church, and for that reason alone we believe her to be infallible."[1] And again: "We do not say that the Church is empowered to judge the Word of God" (as the Calvinists asserted to be the case), "but we do say that she is judge over the divers interpretations which men put upon His Holy Word, and that it appertains to her to discern infallibly between the false and the true exposition thereof. . . . We read in the Acts how an important question touching legal ceremony having arisen, the Church assembled to decide it, and, after due examination, her judgment was delivered in these words, '*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us*' (Acts xv. 28). This mode of speech, so uncommon in Holy Writ, which seems to put the Holy Spirit and His ministers on a level, warns the reader by its very nature that therein God is teaching some important truth to His Church. We might have expected that it would suffice the Apostles to affirm that the Holy Ghost spoke through them; but God, in His Infinite Wisdom, choosing to establish the inviolable authority of the Church in this its first Assembly, inspired them with that magnificent utterance, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,' in order that so striking a beginning might teach all

[1] *Réfut. Œuvres*, vol. xiii. p. 358.

ages to come that the Church is to be heard by the faithful as the very Voice of the Holy Spirit Himself."[1] The sections on Regenerating Grace, Justification, and Good Works are very remarkable, from their clearness and beauty of expression, which invest these hard controversial subjects with singular grace and interest; while here and there epigrammatic sentences occur, which convey a deeper impression than whole volumes of ordinary discussion. "Just as man gives sentence by *declaring* the accused to be innocent, so God gives it by *making* him innocent."[2] "It is faith which justifies, if we believe and confess that we are dead in ourselves, and that we live only through Jesus Christ. This faith justifies us, because it gives birth to humility, and through humility to prayer, and through prayer to confidence, and thus it puts into us (*nous impétre*) the gift of grace whereby our malady is healed and our conscience purified."[3] "Justification comes forth from works, though it is not effected by works, because it is the foundation thereof; just as men grow by means of food, but they are not created by food. Thus works are the fruit of justification, yet nevertheless they promote it, even as our power of taking food is a consequence of life, while yet such food maintains that life."[4]

[1] *Réfut. Œuvres*, vol. xiii. p. 476.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 401.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 419.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 425.

It is pleasant to hear that the result of this controversy was rather to draw the Archdeacon of Metz and the Protestant minister into closer and kindlier intercourse; and ten years later they were working earnestly hand in hand to effect a reunion between the Church and her straying children. Bossuet was eager in behalf of this cause, and he spoke highly of his Protestant friend to Louis XIV. and to those officers of the Church who were interested in the question. "Sundry weighty theologians here," he wrote to his father, "are conferring as to the way of terminating our controversies with the so-called reformers, and of reuniting us all. . . . M. Ferry enters thoroughly into my thoughts. I would they all had his light and his straightforwardness."[1] It appears that Ferry became at length convinced of the errors of his Protestant brethren, and though he never publicly forsook them, he was believed to have made up his mind to do so, when death came suddenly upon him in the year 1669.[2]

The "Réfutation" had a great effect among the Protestants of Metz, and there were also a great number of Jews, who abounded in Metz, among

[1] *Réfut. Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 317.

[2] So say Le Dieu and de Bausset, but M. Floquet denies the assertion, and seems to prove that, although friendly to Bossuet and admiring his personal character, the venerable minister died a Calvinist by conviction and intention.—*Études*, vol. iii. p. 108.

whom Bossuet carried on an extensive work of conversion, for which his profound learning and acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures[1] and the Talmud specially fitted him. Some years earlier a pious woman, Alix Clerginet by name, had opened her own house to sundry young Jewesses who were cast adrift owing to their conversion to Christianity, and Bossuet befriended her earnestly. As the numbers who came to be instructed in the Faith increased on all sides, Bishop de Bédacier thought it well to form this work into a small Sisterhood in the town, whose chief occupation should be to help those women and girls who wished to become Catholics. The Sisters were called "Filles de la Propagation de la Foi;" they were not to be more than twelve in number, of whom not more than seven were to be bound to the Community by vow (and that vow could be dispensed by the Bishop), while the others were to follow precisely the same rule of life, only they were not eligible to the offices of Superior and Assistant-Superior. The Sisters were to elect their own Director, subject to the Bishop's approval. The Rule for this small body of Sisters was drawn up by Bossuet, at the Bishop's request, and it will be found interesting by those who

1 Sainte Beuve says that "tout hébraïque qu'il était d'esprit et de vocation, Bossuet ne savait pas et ne sut jamais l'Hébreu; il en devinait le génie."—*N. Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 347.

study such matters as setting forth Bossuet's mind on the subject. The Rule is eminently practical. A year's probation (two for those who are recent Catholics), and nine days' Retreat for the consideration of their vocation, was required. Under no excuse whatever was the House at any time to become a monastery, or the Sisters nuns. A loving self-devotion to the ignorant who sought religious teaching was to be their great object; their chief devotional practice adoration of the Mysteries of Our Lord, and Christmas their special festival. They were to attend the services of the parish church, and to say the Hours at home, as also litanies, and to observe due seasons of mental prayer. The books specially recommended to them, after Holy Scripture, were the "Imitation," the works of Louis of Grenada and S. Francis de Sales, and the Spiritual Letters of Avila. They were to study "holy poverty;" their dress was to be clean, simple, and not remarkable; and their whole manner of life such that "their moderation might be known unto all men" (Phil. iv. 5). They were to work with their own hands, and to teach the young people they received how to become good servants, or good wives, as the case might be. They were to rise at five o'clock and to be in bed at ten P.M., the day being divided out for work, prayer, and moderate recreation.[1]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xv. p. 286.

There is a good deal in this Rule which recalls S. Vincent de Paul and his Filles de la Charité, and one may fairly suppose that Bossuet's ideas upon such a subject would be in a great measure framed upon those of his venerable friend, who had so recently founded that Order which has since become so widespread and so deservedly loved throughout Christendom.[1] The very practical and simple spirit which dictates this Rule is to be found all through Bossuet's later spiritual teaching. Simplicity and straightforwardness strike one as the leading features in his numerous letters containing direction and guidance of souls. But of this more hereafter.

[1] It was March 25, 1634, that Louise Le Gras was formally consecrated to the work as Superior, and although the Rule was not so soon committed to paper, that arose rather from S. Vincent's favourite habit of "doing before he taught," than because he had not thought it out and adapted it to the work he wished to see done. The Rule seems to have been written for the Sisters in 1646.—MAYNARD, *Vie de S. V. de Paul*, iii. p. 201.

## CHAPTER II.

### BOSSUET AS A PREACHER.

VISIT OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA AND LOUIS XIV. TO METZ—S. VINCENT'S "MESSIEURS DES MARDIS"—MISSION OF METZ—CORRESPONDENCE WITH S. VINCENT DE PAUL—BOSSUET SENT TO PARIS—PREACHES BEFORE THE QUEEN—PANEGYRIC OF S. JOSEPH — QUEEN MARIE THÉRÈSE — ADVENT AND LENT STATIONS—MUSE HISTORIQUE—SERMONS BEFORE THE KING—BOSSUET'S THREE STYLES OF PREACHING—HISTORY OF HIS MANUSCRIPT SERMONS—DÉFORIS' EDITION — LACHAT'S EDITION—BOSSUET'S ELOQUENCE—MADAME DE SEVIGNÉ—LOUIS XIV. AND BOSSUET'S FATHER—JOURNAL DES SAVANS—FLATTERY OF THE PERIOD—QUOTATIONS FROM SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE KING—THE DUTIES OF KINGS—ÉLÉVATIONS—QUOTATION OF SCRIPTURE—OF THE FATHERS—OF CLASSICAL AUTHORS, SAINTE BEUVE AND CRITICISMS—BOSSUET'S EXTENSIVE READING—MARGINAL NOTES—ANECDOTES—SERMON ON DEATH.

THE quiet studious life at Metz was not to last for ever. Bossuet had conquered the temptation set before him by a Parisian life at the time it might have been most prejudicial to his own spiritual progress, and God gave him some years in which to gird on his armour more effectually for the Church's defence; but he was too grand a warrior to be left long in the rear-guard, and that public life he had

shunned was after all about to draw him into its vortex.

In 1656 Bossuet returned to Paris, where he was required to assist at the assemblies of the Sorbonne, and, as might have been expected, claims and duties began to be urged upon so able a Churchman, and efforts to keep him in Paris were made repeatedly. But his duties at Metz were in nowise neglected, and an opportunity for promoting the spiritual welfare of that city was about to develop itself.

In 1657 the Queen-Mother, Anne of Austria, visited Metz. The Emperor Ferdinand III. was just dead, and Cardinal Mazarin aspired to see his young King (who at this time was in fact entirely his subject) elected as successor. Negotiations were set on foot at Frankfort, whither the Maréchal de Grammont was sent, with this view, but they failed entirely, and Leopold, King of Hungary and Bohemia, the late Emperor's son, was elected.[1] Meanwhile the Cardinal brought the Court to Metz, in order to be nearer the scene of action, and the usually quiet town was crowded and dazzled with the presence of the Queen, the young King Louis XIV. and his brother, the Cardinal and his niece the Princesse de Conti,[2] all the ministers and

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.* vol. i. 88.

[2] Anne Marie Martinozzi, wife of Arnaud de Bourbon, Prince de Conti.

dependants of the Court. Bossuet was the great preacher of Metz, to say nothing of the impression he had already made on the sermon-hearing world of Paris; and naturally Anne of Austria, who was essentially *dévote*,[1] wished to hear him preach. Accordingly, on October 15th, she and all the Court (Louis XIV. excepted, who had gone to Nancy) were present in the Cathedral of Metz, when Bossuet preached on the life of Saint Teresa, making a great impression on the Queen, before whom he also privately pleaded the melancholy spiritual condition of the place—the sixteen parishes of which were all under his inspection as *Grand Archidiacre*—owing to the great abuses which had so long interfered with its due rule and order. He had become thoroughly acquainted with the state of things; and so well did he convey his own sense of the pressing evils existing to the Queen, that she returned to Paris bent on doing somewhat on behalf of the neglected city. A mission, such as of late years S. Vincent de Paul had carried on so effectually, seemed the best hope, and accordingly Anne of Austria appealed to him—he had been for some time a member of her "*Conseil de Conscience*,"—to send Missioners to Metz. S. Vincent hesitated.

[1] Fromentières, in his funeral sermon on her, says that, during the fifty years of her abode in France, the Queen never save once failed to hear Mass daily.

His Lazarist Fathers were dedicated specially to the service of the poor in country places, and he did not like to turn them from their own peculiar work to take up that of towns. However, he himself suggested that the "Messieurs des Conférences des Mardis," as he called them, might undertake the good work. Not long before this Society had held their first Mission in the Faubourg Saint-Germain most successfully, although with reluctance at first on their part to embark in so difficult an enterprise. Encouraged by this success, there was no hesitation about the Mission to Metz, and a number of priests (some historians say forty, others twenty) volunteered for the work. A correspondence between S. Vincent and Bossuet as to the carrying out of the plan began at once—the first letter being written by Omer de Champin, a former college friend of Bossuet, and now Doyen du Louvre. We have Bossuet's answer, addressed to S. Vincent, dated January 12, 1658, in which he expresses his earnest desire, as well as that of Mgr. Bédacier, to co-operate with the Missioners in every way—adding, "I feel my own incapacity for doing what I could desire, but I hope by God's Grace that the example of so many holy men, and the lessons I have formerly learnt in your company, may help me to work well with your able Missioners, however little I am fit for in myself. . . . If there is anything which you think

necessary to be done here, in order to prepare men's minds, I shall be glad to receive and execute your directions faithfully, with God's Help."[1] Some difficulty arose at first with respect to a Dominican, who had preached the recent Advent course, and who had been detained by the Bishop in order that he might also preach the Lent station. "I should not like to slight this worthy and learned man by dismissing him,"—so the Bishop writes to S. Vincent,—"and yet I understand that your Missioners wish no other instructions to be given than such as come into their scheme. Can we arrange matters by giving Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday to our Dominican preacher, and letting the Missioners have the other four days clear, as well as all the rest of those days in the Cathedral, if we find them a suitable Church wherein to preach while he occupies the Cathedral? I am very sorry that this awkwardness should have arisen, but as it is so, we must do our best. There is nothing else to be arranged, save how to provide for the reception and lodging of your Missioners, who will be most welcome, coming as they do in the Lord's Name, and from Her Majesty. M. de la Contour (Lieutenant du Roi in Metz—the former comrade of Marshal de Schomberg, and intimate friend of Bossuet, with whom he was always ready to co-operate) has granted us the

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 121.

*logis du Roi*, on the Haute Pierre, where they will be very conveniently lodged; and as to furniture and food, we will see that everything is duly provided."[1]

The details of "furniture and food" are supplied in Bossuet's letters of the same date to M. de Monchy, Superior of the Toul Mission, who had been sent to Metz beforehand to see that the necessary preparations were made. "First of all, thanks to the care and pains of M. de la Contour, we have found the beds, mattresses, sheets, and coverlids mentioned in your list. The town supplies some which were kept by the Receiver, and the rest will be procured from the Concierge or from the Jews, and we shall take care that they do not cost the Mission anything. We have likewise provided the furniture wanted for the rooms. It will not be so easy to find the dishes, table linen, and kitchen requisites; and it would be very expensive to have a cook who supplied everything. Forty sous a day is an extravagant price for Metz, but nevertheless none of the cooks I have seen will undertake the bargain for less. You must, if you please, decide as concerning this; all the same, I will try to find out what can be done more economically, and will let you know what I hear. . . . M. de la Contour wishes very much that you should run up here, to arrange the rooms and furniture, according to the persons you

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 123.

wish to occupy them. If you cannot come, be so good as to give me your orders as to how we shall arrange everything. We will try that everything be seemly—or even, if possible, still better than that."[1]

The Dominican preacher was a greater difficulty. The good man himself was altogether reluctant to relinquish the Cathedral pulpit, although he professed his resolution to do whatever lay in his power to promote the success of the Mission and to dispose the people to benefit by it. Bossuet assured Vincent de Paul that he was a sensible man, anxious to do right and to be accommodating, and while avowing that his own opinion entirely went with the Missioners, as to their keeping all instruction in their own hands, he said that he feared there would be some disturbance if that were carried out, as he foresaw difficulty between the Chapter and the Bishop, who were in a chronic state of collision, so that, although noways antagonistic to the Mission in itself, they were inclined to oppose it as a pet scheme of the Bishop's.

S. Vincent adhered to his point, and required the Dominican to abstain altogether from preaching; and the Bishop yielded, though still reluctantly, as regarded the worthy monk's personal feelings. These however were smoothed down by a handsome present from the Queen, accompanied by a request that he would leave

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 126.

Metz for this season, and return to preach his intended Lent station the following year.

Preparations, material and spiritual, were all thus duly made, and then we find Bossuet lamenting over the severity of the weather, which made what was at that time so long a journey very trying. In those days, when railroads, or even rapid coach travelling, were unthought of, one marvels to read of a certain Frère Matthieu Renard, of the Lazarists, who made no less than fifty-three journeys from Paris to Metz, with relief for the poor! one of which Bossuet records as "almost a miracle, amid the surrounding deluge."[1]

At length, on March 4th, the Missioners arrived at Metz, after a difficult journey, for the floods of that year were altogether unusual in their extent.[2] The conductor of the Mission was Louis de Rochechouart de Chaudenier, Abbot of Tournus, a great-nephew of the famous Cardinal de Rochefoucalt; a devoted son of S. Vincent, and already a friend of Bossuet's. The only other Missioners whose names have reached us are those of de Champin, already mentioned, de Blampignon, the Prior of Mont-Guion, whose gifts for Mission-work had been proved in that of Saint-Ger-

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 120.

[2] S. Vincent de Paul wrote: "A Paris on voit plus de bateaux que de carrosses, et l'effroi règne dans cette capitale."—COLLET, ii. p. 569.

main, and Gédouin, Abbot of Saint-Mesmin, and Chaplain to the King's brother.

The Mission was opened on Ash-Wednesday, March 6th. Bossuet threw himself heartily into it, and took his full share as a member of the Mission (being one of the *Messieurs des Mardis*). Some few times he preached in the Cathedral, but he chiefly confined his work to the Church called Saint Jean de la Citadelle, a humble position on the ramparts, far from the more fashionable and crowded parts of the town, where a more intellectually appreciative audience might have gathered round him. There, every day, he gave a conference and a sermon, chiefly to men and soldiers, and twice a week a "*grand catéchisme.*" What little is known of the Mission comes through S. Vincent, who used to report concerning it at the Conférences des Mardis. In a letter which he wrote, April 6, 1658, to de Chaudenier, he describes an interview which de Chaudenier's brother (likewise a member of the Company) had just had with the Queen, in order to acquaint her with the progress of the Mission she had promoted. Anne of Austria was so delighted at the successful reports, that she asked to have them;[1] and she volunteered to supply whatever funds might be required more during the work.

[1] "Baillez-le-moi, dit elle, je le veux voir, et le retint."—*Vie de S. V. de Paul*, vol. ii. p. 102.

The Mission continued till late in May, when Bossuet wrote to S. Vincent as follows:[1]

"METZ, *May* 23, 1658.

"I cannot let our dear Missioners depart without expressing to you the universal regret and the marvellous edification they leave behind them. Such indeed, that you have every reason to rejoice in the Lord; and I could gladly dilate upon this topic were it not that the results have so greatly exceeded my power of words. Nothing more exemplary, more apostolic, or better ordered than this Mission was ever seen. . . . The Missioners have won all hearts, and now they return to you, weary and spent in body, but rich in remembrance of souls snatched from destruction, and fruits of repentance brought forth by their ministry."

One result of this Mission was the establishment of the Conférences des Mardis in Metz, as a branch of the original Company in Paris. Moreover, after a time, the Queen desired a house to be bought in Metz for the Lazarist Fathers, which was effected in the name of Bénigne Bossuet, the Archdeacon's father, and in 1661 letters patent for it were obtained. But the actual establishment was delayed owing to S. Vincent's death, which occurred in the year 1660, and the House, which was to be both a Seminary and a Mission, did not actually begin to work until 1663. Nicolas

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 131.

de Monchy, who had visited Metz in preparation for the original Mission, was its first Superior.[1]

The Mission of Metz was over, and probably Bossuet looked to a renewal of the same life of devotion and study which he had led for the past six years. But it was not so to be. In the autumn of that same year, 1658, the Chapter of Metz sent him to Paris to negotiate certain affairs concerning their body; and his reputation, which had no doubt been revived in the capricious Paris world by the visit of the Court to Metz, led to his being requested to preach on various occasions, among which, probably the most important of that year, was the Ordination Retreat which he held at Saint-Lazare, in compliance with the request of S. Vincent de Paul. This implied two instructions daily for eleven days, and so admirably were they adapted to their object, that, as the historian Fleury records, men postponed their Priests' Orders with the hope of coming under Bossuet's instructions again the next year. And S. Vincent wrote to one of his priests then at Rome, that "it had pleased God to give a special and inconceivable blessing to the recent Ordinands' Retreat." Bossuet did give the same Retreat again in 1660, the last Lent of S. Vincent's life.

The fame of these sermons led the Queen to desire

[1] *Vie de S. V. de Paul*, vol. ii. p. 106.

once more to hear the eloquent Archdeacon of Metz. Moreover, Her Majesty expressed a desire to hear a certain sermon, or Panegyric, as it was called in those days, on S. Joseph,[1] which Bossuet had preached two years before, during an accidental visit to Paris, and which had been immensely praised by the distinguished congregation gathered to hear it, in which, as the Assembly General of the Clergy was at that time sitting in Paris, there were present twenty-two Bishops, beside Cardinal Barberini, and various other celebrities. François Bossuet had a chapel in the church belonging to the Feuillans, and it was arranged that his kinsman should gratify her Majesty by preaching the much be-lauded sermon[2] on S. Joseph's Day 1659.

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 104.

[2] This sermon was commemorated by the *Muse Historique* of March 24, 1657:—

"Bossuet, ce jeune docteur,
Cet excellent prédicateur,
Et dont l'éloquence naissante
Est si pressante et si jouissante,
Lundi, dans les Feuillans, prêcha,
Et plus que jamais épancha
Dans les cœurs de son auditoire
Le dégoût de la fausse gloire
Et de ce grand éclat mondain,
Que les sages ont à dédain.
. . . . . .
Il débita cette matière
Avec tant d'art et de lumière,

The text was "Depositum custodi," or, as it is in the English Bible, "Keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Tim. vi. 20); and, after some few words concerning the sacredness of a "deposit" generally,

> Avec tant de moralité,
> Avec tant de capacité,
> Que l'Éminence Barberine
> Admirant sa rare doctrine,
> Et plus de vingt et deux prélats
> De l'ouïr n'étaient jamais las."

The same Journal mentions the repetition of the sermon in the No. for March 22, 1659:—

> "L'Abbé Bossuet, esprit rare,
> Qu'aux plus éloquens on compare,
> Mercredi, jour de Saint Joseph,
> Aux Carmélites, dans le nef,
> Fit un sermon si mémorable,
> Qu'il passa pour incomparable.
> Car, soit qu'il fût bien énoncé,
> On qu'il fût bien prononcé,
> Soit pour quantité de passages
> Tirés par lui des saintes pages;
> Soit qu'il fût savant, spécieux,
> Moral, méthodique et pieux;
> Certes tous ceux de l'audience
> En admirèrent l'excellence.
> Surtout les prélats et docteurs
> Et d'autres grands prédicateurs,
> Que d'aller là prirent la peine;
> Et même notre auguste reine,
> Dont l'esprit dévot et chrétien
> Discerne les choses fort bien,
> En parut plus que satisfaite."

the preacher went on to dwell upon the priceless deposit committed to S. Joseph—even the Son of God Himself. "In the Person of Jesus Christ S. Joseph became the depository of the greatest Treasure, whether of God or man. What words can describe the greatness and majesty of such a name?"

From his earliest days of Court preaching, Bossuet shunned to a very remarkable extent a weakness which was far more prevalent and less open to condemnation in his time than our own—that of overt flattery of the great and royal personages before whom he spake. In this, which in some sense may be considered his first Court sermon, he speaks clearly as to the relative value of earthly grandeur and favour in the Sight of God. "Let us seek," he says, "after the hidden life in which Jesus concealed Himself with Joseph. What matters it that men should see us? He is indeed madly ambitious to whom it suffices not that he be seen of God, and it is an insult to Him if we are not content with Him as our spectator. If you are in possession of important office and conspicuous position, if of necessity your life is public, at least remember in all seriousness that your death must be private, for your honours cannot follow you. Suffer not the noise with which men surround you to deaden the Voice of the Son of God speaking within you. He did not say 'Blessed are they that are praised,'

but rather, 'Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you for My Name's Sake.'" And, in conclusion, addressing Anne of Austria, the young preacher ventured to speak these dignified words:

"Madam, the grandeur which surrounds you unquestionably prevents you from enjoying externally the blessed hiddenness of Jesus Christ. Your life is set in the broadest light; and your humility would vainly seek to hide your piety. The victories of our King enhance your glory. . . . Amid so much of glory and of grandeur, what share can your Majesty have in the Hidden Life of Jesus and the shame of His Gospel? Inasmuch as the world offers you nothing but praise, whence can humiliation come, unless you seek it for yourself? This it is, Madam, which should constrain your Majesty, when alone with God, to strip off your royal magnificence, so worthless in His Sight, before His Feet, and, lying there, to steep yourself in the holy shame of penitence. It is too cruel a flattery to tell the great that they are faultless. On the contrary, the very eminence of royalty involves the consequence that no fault of theirs can be trifling. In the contemplation of so many dangers, Madam, let your Majesty seek self-humiliation," etc.[1]

That Anne of Austria was not displeased at the plain speaking she heard on this occasion is proved

[1] *Panégyriques*, vol. xii. p. 132.

by her again going to hear the same sermon two years later, when she was accompanied by the young Queen Marie Thérèse, and from that time the two Queens never neglected an opportunity of hearing Bossuet preach.[1]

For some years his chief vocation appeared to be preaching. Five Lent Stations—1660, at the Minims; 1661, at the Carmelite Church in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques; 1662, at the Louvre—this time before Louis XIV. and his Queen, Henrietta Maria the exiled Queen of England, and all the great people belonging to the Royal Family or Court; 1663, at the Benedictine Church of Val-de-Grace, before the Queen-

[1] The *Muse Historique* for February 1662 again commemorates Bossuet's preaching:—

"Leurs Majestés, l'après dinée
D'icelle sainte journée,
Ouïrent un jeune docteur,
Admirable prédicateur.
Et qui, dès son adolescence,
Prêchait avec tant d'éloquence
Qu'il s'acquit partout grand renom.
L'Abbé Bossuet, c'est son nom,
Dont certes la doctrine exquise
Est digne de servir l'Église,
Et le destin qui dans ses mains
Tient la fortune des humains
Serait envers lui trop féroce,
S'il n'avait un jour mitre et crosse.
On voit peu de gens aujourd'hui
Le mériter si bien qui lui."

Mother; 1666, at Saint Germain en Laye, before the King; and the Advent Stations of 1665 at the Louvre, of 1668 at Saint Thomas du Louvre, and of 1669 at Saint Germain en Laye, of which the first and last were preached before the King. The last of these Advent courses was practically the close of Bossuet's great preaching-day. It was the last station which he preached, "and when Bossuet left the pulpit he was replaced therein by Bourdaloue," writes Lachat.[1] After that, save a few of his great Oraisons Funèbres, he rarely preached save at Meaux, where, if his eloquence was less brilliant, it was not less fervid or earnest in seeking to win his listeners, nor was he less sought after by his provincial hearers than he had been in Paris.

Once again, ten years later, the King desired to hear the man he loved and the preacher he admired, on a great festival of the Church, and accordingly, at Easter[2] 1681, Bossuet preached at Versailles before the King. In his opening words Bossuet refers to his "resuming this office after so many years of silence."

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. xii. Bourdaloue died only about a month after Bossuet.

[2] Cardinal de Bausset gives 1680 as the date of this sermon, but it is recorded in the *Gazette de France* of March 1681, which says: "Le jour de Pâques, Leurs Majestés entendirent la prédication de l'ancien Évêque de Condom."—*Œuvres*, vol. x. p. 164.

On this occasion Bossuet boldly attacked the then ordinary custom (with which his own experience at Metz had made him familiar) of appointing wholly incompetent untrained Bishops, solely as a matter of patronage. After appealing to the Clergy, "who are daily seeking these perilous dignities for yourselves or others," to beware, he goes on to say: "Do not any more set the high places of the Church before the imprudent youth of our land as a stimulus to ambition, or as the due reward of five or six years' study, which ought to be but the beginning of their preparation. Let them rather learn to tremble and shun responsibility, and at least work for the Church, before they attempt to rule her." After dwelling on the solemn appointment and preparation of the Apostles, he goes on:—"And yet we who have done nothing at all,—we aspire to fill their places! If the ecclesiastical body is an army, as all the Fathers and Councils follow S. Paul in affirming it to be, who can, without the greatest danger, presume to command, without having ever obeyed or himself served under others? What order, what discipline can there be, if the officers do not rise gradually? Does not the Army of the Church, which has to encounter all the vices, all the passions, all the weakness, all the bad habits, all the worldly maxims of men, all the wiles of heretics, all the attacks of impiety—in a word, all the powers of

the devil and of hell—do not her soldiers require as much experience and as much courage, though of a different kind, as the secular army? . . . O woe! O desolation! O inevitable destruction to the flock! Have ye forgotten that just but terrible denunciation spoken by Jesus Christ Himself, 'If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?'"[1]

A very large number of Bossuet's sermons were printed and remain to us, besides notes for them, which were often merely scribbled on the backs of letters or chance pieces of paper, and were only preserved as it were by accident. His career as a preacher has been divided into three divisions, and his most intelligent editor, Lachat, says that the spirit of his printed sermons can hardly be entered into without going somewhat into the history of these three periods. Of these the first was at Metz, and "these sermons," says Lachat, "are distinguished by the length at which the subjects are developed, the accumulation of texts, the antiquated language, and a certain emphasis which has something both of roughness and stiffness about it.[2] The second period" (that of Paris) "is

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. 182.

[2] The Abbé Vaillant says of this first period, "Ses expressions sont hardies; elles semblent quelquefois impétueuses et impatientes; on reconnaît *cette force, cette vigueur, ce sang chaud et bouillant du jeune homme*, comme il le dit lui-même, qui l'entraîne, malgré lui, au de là des limites qu'il s'était tracées. Les

distinguished by its rapidity and *entraîn*,—its strength, pathos, dignity, even sublimity; and the third period, that of Meaux, is characterised by more order and regularity, more finish and symmetry, but at the same time by less effusion, less energy and force. The handwriting of these three periods is as characteristically diverse as the matter. In his first compositions the young Archdeacon of Metz wrote hastily on bad paper with a bad pen and worse ink, a sprawling conjectural hand. His *chefs-d'œuvre* are well written, in a clear regular hand; and in his episcopal discourses the character is smaller and weaker, the writing seems to come from a pen which has lost its flexibility and vigour."[1] We have seen already how diligently Bossuet studied, and what a vast fund of Biblical and patristic knowledge he possessed on which to draw when composing his sermons. He habitually used Vatable's Bible, which contains a literal translation from the Hebrew by Leo de Juda side by side with

négligences et les fréquentes âpretés de style annocent un talent encore peu expérimenté. . . . Les manuscrits démontrent un travail pénible. . . . A un âge plus avancé, il parait plus calme : maître de son imagination, il ne lui donne un libre essor que par intervalles, . . . au déclin de l'âge, le génie de ce grand homme n'a rien perdu de son énergie et du feu qui l'anime . . . son langage est toujours celui d'une raison élevée, mais temperée par la tendresse et par les sollicitudes pastorales."—*Études sur les Sermons de Bossuet*, p. 33.

[1] LACHAT, *Les Sermons*, vol. viii. p. xviii.

the Vulgate,[1] so that, as he said, he was the better able to grasp the spirit of the inspired words. His powers of composition, natural and cultivated, were rapid and fertile in the extreme, and if a sudden necessity required it, he could pour forth the most brilliant and learned improvisation; but save under the pressure of a most imperious necessity, he never would preach without preparing at least a pencil sketch,—without writing down his points, and the prominent lessons he wished to teach. His early manuscripts are carelessly written, the paper scribbled over from one end to the other, without any margin or room for notes or corrections; but later on there are tokens of a very different style of composition; at least half the MS. is margin, and that is continually filled to overflowing. He continually rewrites a passage, corrects, alters, abbreviates, condenses, in short entirely changes his original sentence. He wrote with no intention of publishing his sermons,—indeed he sometimes expressed himself strongly with respect to those who considered the after effects in print more than the immediate object of their sermons; and the few (chiefly funeral orations) that were printed during

[1] "Pour l'Ancien Testament, je n'ai jamais fait autre chose que de lire la version selon l'Hébreu, la conférer avec la Vulgate; prendre le génie de la langue sainte et de ses manières de parler. Vatable seul fournit tout cela."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 111.

his life were drawn from him reluctantly. At his death, all his MSS. came into the possession of the Abbé Bossuet, Bishop of Troyes, "that petty nephew of a great uncle," as de Maistre calls him. He had neither inclination or capacity to edit Bossuet's sermons; moreover he lost sundry, lending the manuscripts about carelessly to persons who seem to have been as careless as himself, for the subsequent editors failed to recover all that were known to have existed. These valuable MSS. were again left by the Bishop of Troyes to his nephew, President Chasot, who committed them all to the Benedictines *des Blanc Manteaux* of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and they took great pains to put forth an edition of the Sermons, generally known as the Déforis edition, which was published in 1772. But Dom Déforis was like too many other restorers,—he doctored and altered and "improved" according to his own ideas, till, as has been said, "il les a mis, non seulement en ordre, mais encore en œuvre." Still it is only fair to bear in mind, while we regret his mistake, that his well-meant labours (which were enormous) saved these valuable papers from entire destruction, and handed them on to us, while the pious editor himself perished beneath the guillotine in 1793.

Several editions followed, all cast in the same mould, so that in the beginning of the nineteenth century de

Maistre wrote, "No celebrated author was ever so unfortunate in respect to his posthumous works as Bossuet;" until in 1862 the publisher Vivés brought out Lachat's edition of the writings of one whom even Voltaire condescended to call "the most eloquent of Frenchmen," restoring them as far as possible to the precise condition in which the author left them, clearing away all Déforis' additions and interpolations, and putting them into the hands of his readers, it may reasonably be believed, much as Bossuet would himself have done had he published them while living. Those who are interested in a minute investigation of Lachat's painstaking work (in which he was assisted by Louis Veuillot,[1] Cousin, de Nicolay, and Mgr. Sergent, Bishop of Quimper), will read his "Remarques Historiques" on the subject with attention, at the beginning of Volume viii. of his edition of Bossuet's works.

A great number of sermons, funeral orations, *Élévations* and instructions of Bossuet's are yet in our hands, —the quantity that he must have composed may be imagined when we consider that while at Metz he preached continually in the Cathedral, at the Church of the Citadel, and in other localities, besides frequent accidental sermons at Paris or elsewhere:—that during the ten years he spent in Paris, before becom-

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. lxvii.

ing tutor to the Dauphin, preaching was his chief occupation, and that after he became Bishop of Meaux his rule was to preach in his own Cathedral on every festival (and these were more numerous before the Concordat than now), as well as every time that he held an ordination, confirmation, or any other solemn ceremony; he frequently attended the monthly "*conférences cantonales*," for which he himself always selected the subjects, and always gave the opening and closing addresses of his Diocesan Synod. Moreover, he constantly gave instructions in the various religious houses of his diocese, whether of men or women, and he was never better pleased or more at home than when preaching in some humble village church. The Abbé Le Dieu tells us how he used to admire him going about from parish to parish, the Gospel in his hand, meditating on it as he went, the better to fill his own mind with the truths he was about to set before the people, and giving his whole prayerful attention as much to the simplest country congregation as to the most learned Parisian audience, not lowering himself to the humble, but raising them by the clearness and simplicity of his thoughts and expressions, thundering —for he was a most vehement orator—in the morning against the deadly sins, the enmities and frauds of some town district, and in the evening confirming in some religious house, and speaking words of the

sweetest, most rapt mysticism to the saintly women there assembled. Whenever a Mission was held in his diocese, Bossuet was sure to be there, and taking part in it.

But a very few of these discourses have been preserved;—as has been already said, they were often spoken from a few notes written on the back of a letter, and filled up as he went on from the warmth of his own glowing heart. In one of his sermons, preached on the first Sunday in Lent, 1662, before Louis XIV. and the Queens, on Preaching,[1] after a masterly setting forth of the uses of sermons ("ou les hommes ne connaissent pas la vérité, ou les hommes ne pensent pas à la vérité, ou les hommes ne sont pas touchés de la vérité," etc.[2]), he concludes with an earnest prayer that God would render his words effectual, and give him wisdom, power, simplicity; above all, that He Alone would set forth His Gospel in all its purity from that pulpit, and that men should be as nothing there.[3]

Such seems always to have been Bossuet's aim, however great his popularity and however much he was cried up by men. After his death, Père de la Rue spoke of him as "stripping his eloquence of whatever

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ix. p. 59. The MS. is marked in Bossuet's own hand, "prêché devant le Roi."

[2] *Ibid.* p. 41.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 56. Bossuet was about to preach the whole of the Lenten course.

was calculated rather to please than to edify"—thereby justifying Pascal's assertion, "La vraie éloquence se moque de l'éloquence."[1]

It seems curious that any discussion should have arisen as to Bossuet's real eloquence; nevertheless the matter has been questioned—on the sole ground, apparently, of what his chief biographer, Cardinal de Bausset, says in his life when he speaks of it as a literary problem[2] that the severe and methodical style of Bourdaloue should have had greater fascinations for a Parisian audience than the "rich fertile abundance, the sublime *élan*, and the magnificent apostrophes" of Bossuet; in proof of which he alleges that his contemporaries are silent as to the Bishop of Meaux, "rarely speaking of him as an orator, and never as a preacher." But this is scarcely so. The Cardinal's chief ground for the assertion is that Mme. de Sevigné "never once alludes to Bossuet's funeral orations, 'et si elle n'en parle pas, c'est qu'on en parlait bien peu dans le monde où elle vivait.'" But first of all this is not quite true. Mme. de Sevigné, writing to her cousin the Comte de Bussy, after giving an elaborate description of the decorations of Notre-Dame on the occasion of the Grand Condé's funeral —the "most magnificent and most triumphal funeral pomp ever seen since men existed" (a subject, it must

[1] *Pensées*, Edit. Faugère, vol. i. p. 151. [2] *Vie*, vol. i. p. 165.

be confessed, more congenial to the lady's taste and intellect than Christian oratory—goes on to say that Bossuet preached the funeral oration,[1] and that she had just seen a prelate who had heard it, and who said that "M. de Meaux had surpassed himself, and that so fine a subject had never been so well handled and set forth." Some contemptuous remarks from the profligate de Bussy may be taken at what they are worth. On another occasion—the profession of Mme. de la Vallière, a spectacle which Mme. de Sevigné certainly regarded in no better light than as a sight, though she regretted having missed it—she goes on to say, "What will astonish you is that Bossuet's sermon was not so divine as was hoped."[2] Mme. de Sevigné does not enlarge much generally on such topics; and in fact she says little more in the way of laudation of Bourdaloue, except that in one letter, after accusing him of personalities in preaching, she goes on to say, "People say that he exceeds all former marvels, and that nobody has preached till now."[3] Probably a good deal of Mme. de Sevigné's silence

[1] *Lettre CMLXXXI.*, vol. viii. p. 222.

[2] "Mais ce qui vous étonnera, c'est que le sermon de M. de Condom ne fut point aussi divin qu'on l'espérait."—*Lettre CCCXCII.*, vol. iii. p. 404.

[3] "Avec tout cela, on dit qu'il passe toutes les merveilles passées, et que personne n'a prêché jusqu'ici."—*Lettre CCXXIII.*, vol. ii. p. 325.

may be explained by a note to one of de Bussy's sneering letters, written by Gault de Saint-Germain, himself speaking with a sneer: "On admiroit Bossuet, mais on n'étoit pas encore à la hauteur de cette philosophie Chrétienne dont il jetoit les fondements, et qui ne tient compte des avantages temporels qu'avec l'éclat des vertus qui mettent le comble au bonheur et à la gloire des peuples."[1] Very decided indeed, in spite of Cardinal de Bausset's assertion, are the opinions which we do find expressed by Bossuet's contemporaries, beginning with Louis XIV. himself, who, hearing him preach for the first time in Advent 1661,[2] desired that a letter might be written by his private secretary, Président Rose, in his name, to Bossuet's father, to congratulate him on having such a son. The old Councillor at Metz must have felt proud at such a compliment, and perhaps hardly less so in Lent 1665, when the King,—having noticed an old man standing behind the pulpit, who seemed more than ordinarily attentive, and at times greatly moved, during Bossuet's sermon,—Louis XIV. inquired who he was, and on being told that the old man was

[1] See note, *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. viii. p. 227.

[2] Lachat assigns this compliment on the part of the King to the Lent Station of 1662.—*Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. 8. It seems to have been in 1661 that Bossuet was appointed by *brevet royal* to the office of *Prédicateur ordinaire du Roi.*"—FLOQUET, vol. ii. p. 207.

Bénigne Bossuet, the preacher's father, the King exclaimed, with a burst of natural feeling, "How happy he must be to hear his son preach so well!"

Both the Queens followed Bossuet wherever he went to preach, and Mme. de Lafayette, the fair mouthpiece of the Court, speaks of his "great eloquence and deeply religious tone." The venerable Père de Neuville, after an enthusiastic wish that he had lived sooner, so as to have profited more by "this unique master of the sublime, the energetic, and the pathetic," says, "I believe that with talent, study, and exertion, one might hope to tread in the footsteps of the immortal Bourdaloue, and aspire to resemble him, without flattering one's self one could equal the model. But as to a Bossuet—he is born ready-made! he is not formed gradually and by development, and there would be almost as much folly in attempting to imitate him as madness in hoping to equal him."[1]

It would be tedious to go through a string of quotations from contemporaries, the laudatory tone of which pall upon one's taste. Passing over, then, a multitude which may be found in Lachat's "Remarques Historiques,"—we need only refer to the Academy, "ce conseil réglé et perpétuel dont le crédit est établi sur l'approbation publique," and which received Bossuet in 1671, with an allusion to his

[1] *Vie*, vol. i. p. 127.

having "won the applause of all France by his far-famed preaching, and the *éclat* with which he filled the pulpit." And the same authority speaks of him as "a Chrysostom." The *Journal des Savans* for 1704 too says, "Eloquence in M. de Meaux is not the result of study; everything in him is natural and superior to art, or rather the innate sublimity of his genius and his intellect gives birth without effort or research to an art superior to that with which we are acquainted. Hence those noble forms, those grand lights, those bold living expressions, in a word, that power which nothing can resist. To this vigorous, manly eloquence he united the advantage gained by sound learning,—that of being full, solid, and instructive. He sought to throw light upon religion, and he did not win the heart until he had enlightened the mind." Chateaubriand says,—"L'Évêque de Meaux a crée une langue que lui seul a parlée, où souvent le terme le plus simple et l'idée la plus relevée, l'expression la plus commune et l'image la plus terrible, servent, comme dans l'Écriture, à se donner des dimensions énormes et frappantes."[1]

Enough, perhaps too much, on this head. But

[1] *Génie du Christianisme*, Ptie. iii. L. iv. p. 306. M. Sainte Beuve calls Bossuet, "l'homme le plus puissant par la parole, le plus véritablement éloquent que nous ayons eu dans notre langue; ne cessons de lui accorder ce qui lui est dû, et cependant ne lui accordons pas toute chose."—*Nouveaux Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 338.

before dismissing the special consideration of Bossuet as a preacher, there are one or two points which ought to be noted as conveying a definite idea of one who left so remarkable a stamp on the times in which he lived. And one of these, which has been already alluded to, is a most noticeable characteristic, *i.e.* the absence of flattery and the remarkably plain speaking which Bossuet used both to his Royal listeners and their Court.[1] Duly to estimate this it is needful to bear in mind the tone and habits of the period, which

[1] M. Sainte Beuve takes a somewhat different view. He says, "'Bossuet était pliant et un peu faible devant les puissances, et il avait bien des égards au monde. Il était le premier à sentir ce foible de son caractère, et un jour qu'en quittant la supérieure d'une communauté de Meaux, il lui disait l'adieu d'usage, 'Priez Dieu pour moi,' comme cette supérieure lui repondit: 'Que lui demanderai-je?' il répliqua: 'Que je n'aie point de complaisance pour le monde.'"—*Nouveaux Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 340.

De Maistre says of Bossuet: "Jamais l'autorité n'eut de plus grand, ni surtout de plus intègre défenseur. La cour était pour lui un véritable sanctuaire, où il ne voyait que la puissance divine dans la personne du Roi. La gloire de Louis XIV. et son absolue autorité ravissaient le prélat, comme si elles lui avaient appartenu en propre. Il loue le monarque, du fond d'un cœur dévoué; il ne loue que parce qu'il admire; et sa louange est toujours parfaitement sincère; elle part d'une certaine foi monarchique, qu'ont sent mieux qu'on ne la peut définir; et son admiration est communicative, car il n'y a rien qui persuade comme la persuasion. La soumission de Bossuet n'a rien d'avilissant, parce qu'elle est purement chrétienne. L'obeissance qu'il prêche au peuple est une obéissance d'amour, qui ne rabaisse point l'homme."—*De l'Église Galli.* L. ii. c. 12.

were those of a profuse, fulsome adulation, such as in our day would be considered almost an insult to those to whom it was offered. It was the custom for preachers and orators to lavish words of flattery upon their noble, especially their royal hearers, which, if interpreted as having any real meaning, would lead us to invest with every grace and virtue men and women whose lives were often glaringly opposed to all that is saintly or even religious. One would not for a moment defend such unreal expressions, nor even excuse them on the ground that they were generally altogether conventional; but it is satisfactory to note their absence as a rule from the religious utterances of so great a man as Bossuet. Not that even he is quite free from compliments or attributing more to royal personages than we can honestly feel to be borne out by facts,—but one must keep in mind the habits and exigencies of the time, and moreover note how any such conventional laudations are qualified, or turned to some high-toned lesson. One of Bossuet's plain-spoken addresses to the Queen Mother has been already quoted. So again, on All Saints' Day 1669, preaching before Louis XIV., he boldly says:—"Ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Majesty, of a truth, is never extinguished,—it descends from one to another—*Le roi ne meurt jamais*, we say; and the image of God is immortal, but nevertheless

the man falls, dies, and his glory does not follow him to the grave. Not so with the immortal citizens of the heavenly country—they are as gods, they can die no more, they can neither deceive nor be deceived. . . ." And after continuing in this strain awhile, he concludes, "Sire, he were abhorred of God and men who failed to desire your glory even in this life, or who refused to strive to promote it with all his heart. But assuredly it were to be faithless and a traitor to your Majesty, were I to limit my desires on your behalf to this perishable world. May you then live ever happy, ever successful, victorious over your enemies, the father of your people. But may you also live ever worthy, just, humble, and pious, ever stedfast in your religion and faithful to the Church. So we shall ever see in you a noble king, crowned alike in this world and the next."[1]

And again, on Advent Sunday 1665, "What, Sire, will it avail you to have thus achieved the glory of France, . . . if, after the world and history have re-echoed your name, you are found wanting in those other works which only are valuable in God's Sight and written in the Book of Life? This day's Gospel has set before your Majesty the amazement of the terrified world in that dreadful day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come in His Majesty. If the stars, the elements,

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. viii. pp. 39, 51.

and the mighty works of creation which God seems to have framed to endure for ever are then to crumble, what will become of the works of man's hands? Will not that devouring fire consume cities and fortresses, palaces and all pleasant places,—inscriptions and titles, history itself—until all monuments of all kings are but a heap of ashes? Can men attribute to themselves any real greatness in that which will one day be nought save dust? There must indeed be other greatness, other annals!"[1]

In the second week of Lent, 1662, preaching on Final Impenitence, Bossuet speaks in these plain words to the King:—

"Ah, could I lay bare before you here the heart of a Nebuchadnezzar or a Belshazzar, of a Nero or a Domitian, you would behold with horror and trembling what comes in high places from forgetfulness of God, and the terrible misfortune of having none set over you. Thence it is that lust ever refines and feeds upon itself. Thence spring all the nameless forms of avarice, voluptuousness, and pride which are paraded before the face of men. So long as all the world applauds, it is easy to excuse one's self; and once given up to such license, a man reckons as a virtue each crime which he fails to commit, each sin from which he abstains. And what is the cause of all this?

[1] Vol. viii. p. 113.

Excessive power, fertile in crime, license, the parent of all excess: 'Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever, so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it' (Isa. xlvii. 7)."[1]

On Palm Sunday, 1662, in the presence of all the Court, Bossuet boldly preached to Louis XIV. on the Duty of Kings. After dwelling awhile on the special topic of the day, "Behold thy King cometh unto thee," he turns to the Royal personage, saying, "Sire, I beseech your Majesty to set before yourself this day Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the Great High Priest, as placing His Gospel on your head and in your hands: on your head, to teach you obedience; in your hands, to teach it to your subjects."[2] And a little further on: "How great the wrong if kings seek pleasures which God forbids; if they turn against Him the powers He commits to them; if they break the laws which they are bound to maintain. This is the great overwhelming danger of the great ones of the earth. They are bound to combat their passions like other men; but beyond all other men they are bound to resist their own power. For inasmuch as some restraining influence is necessary to all men, those in power, to whom all else yields, are bound to put restraint upon themselves. No man is fit to exercise power save he who is most

[1] Vol. ix. p. 184. [2] *Ibid.* p. 620.

reticent in using it. . . . Sire, be faithful to God, and do not hinder the great things He has in store for you by your sins."[1] Such passages might be indefinitely multiplied, and perhaps some of the most striking occur in the more historical orations, to which we shall return, *e.g.* when he says of Anne de Gonzague, the Princess Palatine (whose intrigues during the war of the Fronde had won her no honourable fame before her conversion at the age of fifty-six), that she possessed "all the virtues which people hell;"[2] or the more attractive description of our unhappy Queen Henrietta Maria: "Despising thrones which may be usurped, she fixed her heart on the Kingdom where no one fears to find their equals, and where there is no jealousy of rivals."[3] Nor was it to royalty alone that the preacher —who, as Gault de Saint-Germain said, "was laying the foundations of a lofty Christian philosophy" among his contemporaries—pressed home the stern truths which could scarcely come acceptably to the luxurious, self-indulgent, often profligate courtiers, both men and women, to whom he was too often, it is to be feared, but "as the song of one that hath a very pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ix. pp. 624-635.

[2] "Toutes les vertus dont l'enfer est rempli."—Vol. xii. p. 541.

[3] "Dédaignant les trônes qui peuvent être usurpés, elle attacha son affection au royaume où l'on ne craint point d'avoir des égaux, et où l'on voit sans jalousie des concurrens."—*Ibid.* p. 465.

they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezek. xxxiii. 32).

The spirit of the world, and more especially as it prevails in a Court life, is continually attacked. Thus: "You gain nothing by not swallowing the whole draught of profligacy at once, if you sip it gradually; if, well-nigh unconsciously, you let your heart be filled with the subtle contagion which one breathes in with the very atmosphere of the world's customs and conversation. Who can pretend to describe all the perils of the world? That subtle and dangerous master keeps open school without dogmatising; it has its own peculiar way of stamping its impressions on the unthinking, without any attempt to prove them. As many men as we hold converse with, so many propagandists of the world's teaching we encounter. Our enemies through fear, and our friends through kindness, alike instil false notions of good and evil. All the common talk of society commends ambition, without which a man is not of the world, or a false gallantry, without which he is esteemed stupid. . . . One while it is a clever joke, another the seductive description of a bad action, which gives us a quietly unconscious impression. . . . This kind of seduction is almost universal in the world, so that if you turn to Tertullian, he will tell you that the very air is infected with its antichris-

tian corrupt maxims."[1] The idle vanity which affects youthfulness as years roll on is severely handled;[2] the excesses of dress and personal vanity in women;[3] the "mortal lethargy" which deadens the worldly soul to its true interests, while it is lively and active on the world's side;[4] the shrinking from exposure of slander, injustice, meanness before men, and the callous indifference to God as a witness thereof;[5] the extreme carelessness as to Sacraments and holy things characteristic of courtiers, "who know not what they believe or disbelieve, ready to grant anything you will, so long as you let them please themselves and lead the life they like;"[6] each in turn comes under the preacher's condemnation.

One sermon, already referred to, on Final Impenitence,[7] may fairly be bracketed with Massillon's celebrated "Mauvais Riche." After describing the career of Dives, Bossuet says: "Such is the life of a man of the world, and almost all those who are before me now will, if they do not beware, find themselves in much the same case. . . . Plenty, prosperity, an easy and voluptuous life, are often compared in Holy Writ to an impetuous torrent which cannot be stayed, and which flows downward unable to bear its own impetus."

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ix. p. 45.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. viii. p. 85.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. ix. pp. 292, 495.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 92.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 96.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 185.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 178.

Then, after a vivid picture of this restless, dissatisfied, futile life, Bossuet says, "Such, if I mistake not, is a true description of the worldly life, and of Court life. But, O man of weighty affairs, you who play so important a part in the world's great comedy, what are you doing for the greatest of all business, that of Eternity? All other cares should yield to this. How do you stand therein?" . . . "One of the greatest evils of a worldly life is that it is always hurried. I hear men of the world say daily that they have no time—hours and days fleet by, and in this perpetual movement the most important of all cares—their salvation—is lost sight of."

Surely there is both grandeur and eloquence in his apostrophe to the Atheists, whom he knew abounded in Louis XIV.'s Court, and whom he warned that, let them affect to disbelieve as they would, their Eternity was an inevitable fact. "Hommes sensuels, qui ne renoncez à la vie future que parce que vous craignez les justes supplices, n'espérez plus au néant; Non, non, n'y espérez plus. VOULEZ-LE, NE LA VOULEZ PAS, VOTRE ÉTERNITÉ VOUS EST ASSURÉE."[1]

The sermons on the "Love of Pleasure,"[2] on "Earthly Judgments,"[3]—in which some most striking passages concerning our indulgence in judging ourselves and our severity to others occur—that on

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. 50. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ix. p. 199. [3] *Ibid.* p. 272.

Slander,[1] and the fourth sermon for Easter Day,[2] are good specimens of Bossuet's special style of preaching to perhaps the most brilliant, superficial, and luxurious congregation any man ever addressed. There are also a large number addressed to Religious, of which some twelve were preached at *vêtures* and *prises de voile.* These are of a gentler, less stern character than those addressed to the Court, as might be expected. There is also a volume[3] of what Bossuet called *Élévations*, which were a familiar exposition of some psalm or passage of Holy Scripture, intended to help the good Religious to whom they were given in their meditations, rather than sermons. These last are well adapted, in their published form, for meditation—each Élévation occupies about a page, and they are divided into twenty-five weeks, — the number of Élévations for each week varying considerably.

No one can take up Bossuet's sermons without being struck by the extent to which he quotes Holy Scripture:[4] every discourse is full of passages often

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ix. p. 350. [2] *Ibid.* vol. x. p. 164.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. vii.

[4] "Bossuet veut que le prédicateur fasse parler Jésus Christ, qu'il puise tout dans les Saintes Écritures; qu'il en emprunte même les termes sacrés, non-seulement pour fortifier, mais pour embellir son discours. Il demande que le désir de gagner les âmes ne leur fasse chercher que les choses et les sentiments."—VAILLANT, *Études*, p. 166.

"La Bible, ce livre divin, qui naguère illuminant son adoles-

most striking in their thoughtful application; nor does he at all confine himself to the more obvious and commonly cited portions of the Sacred Writings—every part is used, and in a way which brings forcibly to an attentive reader the impression of an extraordinarily familiar, minute, and reflective knowledge of the Bible on Bossuet's part. His sermons are often almost a paraphrase of it.

So too with the Fathers. The enormous amount of quotations from their writings indicates the thorough familiarity with his patristic library, which we know he possessed. S. Augustine was, as has been said, Bossuet's favourite author,[1] and you can hardly

cence, lui vint révéler un monde nouveau, et d'année en année lui est devenu cher de plus en plus; la Bible, lue, relue chaque jour, scrutée, pénetrée, est pour l'ardent docteur une merveilleuse et inépuisable source d'instruction, de bonheur. . . . Imbu ainsi des Saintes Écritures, quelle grandeur devait emprunter d'eux son génie! . . . son fond, c'est d'être nourri de l'Écriture, d'en tirer l'esprit, d'en prendre les plus hauts principes, de les manier en maître," etc.—FLOQUET, vol. i. p. 230.

[1] "Son admiration pour 'ce maître si maître' se devait, pendant sa vie, toute entière, épancher chaque jour, sans s'épuiser jamais."—*Ibid.* p. 233.

The Abbé Le Dieu says:—

"Quand il avoit un sermon à faire à son peuple, avec sa Bible, il me demandoit Saint Augustin; quand il avoit une erreur à combattre, un point de foi à établir, il lisoit Saint Augustin. On le voyoit courir rapidement sur tous les ouvrages de ce Père propres à ce sujet."—*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 51.

open upon a page in which he is not cited; next to him, Tertullian is the most copiously used. You will scarcely find one sermon in which he is not quoted. SS. Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Bernard, Gregory the Great, and Ambrose come next in the scale of frequent reference: SS. Clement of Alexandria, Cyril, Gregory Nyssen, Hilary, Leo, Peter Chrysologus, Jerome, Basil, Cyprian, Paulinus of Nola, frequently; so also, though more rarely, Origen, Justin Martyr, S. Athanasius, S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and S. Irenæus, and occasionally the less familiar writers, S. Pacian, S. John Climachus, S. Optatus, S. Avitus, S. Dionysius, S. Hormisdas, S. Prosper, S. Eucharius of Lyons, S. Denys the Areopagite, Hincmar, Pope Innocent I., Lactantius, Sulpitius Severus, Philo the Jew, Arnobius, Salvian, S. Fulgentius, Richard of St. Victor, S. Thomas of Villeneuve, and various other less-known early writers.[1] Historians, such as Eusebius, Theodoret, Cassiodorus, Josephus, are often referred to; Councils are freely quoted, and from time to time Sallust, Cæsar, Tacitus, Pliny, Seneca, Plutarch, Cicero, Lucian, Juvenal, Quintus Curtius, and Plato, for quoting which last classical author Bossuet makes a sort of apology:

[1] All these writers are mentioned regardless of chronology, but rather with respect to the use made of them by Bossuet.

"Ne vous étonnez pas si je cite ce philosophe en chaire."[1]

It was rather later than this that La Bruyère wrote (1687): "Il y a moins d'un siècle qu'un livre français était un certain nombre de pages latines où l'on découvrait quelques lignes on quelques mots de notre langue. Les passages, les traits et les citations n'en étaient pas restés là. Ovide et Catulle achevaient de décider des mariages et des testaments et venaient, avec les Pandectes, au secours de la veuve et des

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ix. p. 565.

The Abbé Vaillant gives an interesting sketch of the abuse of classical allusions at this period:—

"La chaire, au commencement du xvii^e^ siècle, et jusqu'au temps de Bossuet, semblait rivaliser avec l'école en pédantisme et en subtilités. Il n'y a pas d'écrivain si obscur, ni de poëte si licencieux que les ministres de la parole sainte n'osassent citer aux pieuses femmes qui formaient leur auditoires, et les citations étaient si longues et si fréquentes, que les fidèles ne devaient pas savoir quelle langue parlait l'orateur. . . . Lorsqu'on eut épuisé les citations, les distinctions, les divisions et les subdivisions, la mode changea. On eut recours aux fleurs de la rhétorique—le langage des ruelles remplaça l'idiome barbare de la scholastique. De là, ce triple abus que nous pouvons signaler dans les discours de la chaire au commencement du xvii^e^ siècle; abus de l'érudition profane, abus de la théologie, abus de la rhétorique; non pas que ces trois choses ne soient belles et utiles, elles sont même indispensable à l'orateur sacré, mais quel est le don du ciel dont l'esprit ne puisse abuser? On s'en convaincra en se reportant à l'époque où Bossuet commença sa carrière apostolique, et en comparant ses travaux avec ceux de ses devanciers."—*Etudes*, p. 140.

pupilles : le sacré et le profane ne se quittaient point; ils s'étaient glissés ensemble jusque dans la chaire ; Saint Cyrille, Horace, Saint Cyprien, Lucrèce, parlaîent alternativement. Les poëtes étaient de l'avis de Saint Augustin et de tous les Pères. On parlait latin et longtemps grec devant des femmes et des marguilliers, on a parlé grec ; il fallait savoir prodigieusement pour prêcher si mal."[1]

One can scarce wonder at Bossuet's apology with this criticism, and with some of the grotesque illustrations of pedantic classical quotation, given by the Abbé Vaillant, before one's eyes ; or that, as he grew older, many of the quotations in his earlier MSS. are erased. Yet most certainly Bossuet's style and the beauty of his poetical imaginations were very much gathered from his thorough classical knowledge : " Il allait se chauffer devant le soleil d'Homère, comme il le disait lui-même," says the Abbé Vaillant, " et quels traits admirables il doit à ses souvenirs de Virgile !" In truth he dug deep into the mine of antiquity, and using its stores as the heritage of Christianity, anticipated the beautiful lines of a poet dear to England :—

"Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays,
Lo ! here the 'unknown God' of thy unconscious praise !
The olive wreath, the ivied wand,
The sword in myrtles drest,

[1] *De la Chaire*, c. xv.

Each legend of the shadowy strand
Now wakes a vision blest;
As little children lisp and tell of Heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thought to these high Bards were given.

And these are ours: Thy partial grace
The tempting treasure lends:
These relics of a guilty race
Are forfeit to thy friends;
What seem'd an idol hymn now breathes of Thee,
Tuned by Faith's ear to some celestial melody."

Perhaps we may be excused, before leaving this subject, for quoting one of M. Sainte Beuve's clear, interesting criticisms. "Bossuet," he says, "knew Greek, but the thing which he knew thoroughly, admirably, as a mother tongue, was Latin—and that all sorts of Latin, Cicero as well as Tertullian and Saint Augustine. He was perfectly at home in it—he spoke it, he argued in the schools in it, he wrote Latin letters to the foreign prelates with whom he corresponded, the copious notes with which he covered the margin of his books were generally in Latin. It was, thanks to this thorough knowledge of Latin and the excellent use to which he put it, that Bossuet poured forth such a new, full, substantial French language—so original, yet so true to its roots. Nor is it only in the detail of expression, or word, that we feel the influence of Latinity, it is also in the fulness of the sentences, the combination and juxtaposition of

phrases—in fact in its every attitude. . . . Bossuet often reinstates words in their full and primary Latin purity by the use to which he puts them, reviving, so to say, their flavour and life. Even when not absolutely eloquent, his language, like that of Cato and Lucretius, may be called *docta et cordata*,—free from all feebleness: this I should select as Bossuet's chief characteristic. . . . Of all men Bossuet has the mind which comprehends most fully, with most enlightenment, and most entirely, the world of moral, political, civil, and religious doctrines, and who excels most in setting them forth with clearness, brilliancy, and splendour, looking at them from the most exalted or central point of view. Like the ruler and king of his sphere, he gathers them together, develops all their springs, combines all their movements, and brings forth their respective harmonies, like the stops of a huge organ in a vast cathedral nave. But, at the same time, his is a mind which does not quit that nave, that well-filled sphere—a mind which feels no need to go out thence, which practically *originates* nothing, and never innovates. He abhors novelty, disturbance, and change: in a word, he is the grandest and most sovereign organ and interpreter of all that is primordial and established."[1]

The only modern author[2] quoted in Bossuet's ser-

[1] *Nouveau Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 349.

[2] Bossuet says himself, "I have not read many French

mons, as far as I am aware, is the historian Tillemont, and that once only. Various other references are frequently made to different authors very little known, and it would hardly be possible to read one sermon without detecting that the author was a man of considerable reading. It is to be remarked that Bossuet more often than not quotes the original passage of which he is making use, and his MSS. are freely written over in Greek. We are told by the Abbé Le Dieu that he wrote Greek freely and rapidly, but not always very legibly.

The amount of marginal notes attached to his sermons written after the Metz period show how carefully and attentively they were prepared and revised. Probably they often served to guide him in introducing some fresh train of thought, or in enlarging a particular point. Thus we find, in a sermon on Brotherly Love, a marginal note to this effect:—

"On ne peut jamais aimer le prochain sans aimer Dieu.

"L'aimer sincèrement, c'est l'aimer comme nous, et non pour nous.

"Il n'y a que Dieu qui doive aimer tout pour soi-même.

books;" and then, after mentioning de Balzac and the "Lettres au Provincial," he says, "The books and prefaces of the Port-Royalists are worth reading for their *gravité et grandeur*."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 108.

"Amour de société et non amour d'interêt.

"Pour cela, il faut être détaché de soi-même.

"Nulle créature ne mérite qu'on se détache de soi-même pour elle, et l'on ne peut pas faire cet effort pour la créature.

"Mais Dieu est infiniment au dessus de nous: après l'effort de l'aimer plus que soi-même, on peut faire celui d'aimer le prochain comme soi-même.

"On trouve, en réunissant à Dieu tout son amour, une abondance infinie qui ensuite peut se répandre sur tous les hommes sans exception.

"Sans cette abondance d'amitié, l'amitié n'est que partialité et dégénére en cabale.

"Prendre garde de ne gâter jamais ni de détourner en nous la source de de l'amour." [1]

Again among the notes similarly added to a Good Friday sermon :—

"Tout est mysterieux dans la passion du Fils de Dieu. Caïphe prophétise ; Pilate le déclare Roi des Juifs, *rex Judæorum ;* le peuple demande que son sang tombe sur lui, *sanguis super nos*, par la vengeance, par la rédemption ; il ne veut point de celui-ci, mais il lui préfère Barabbas : *Non hunc sed Barabbem ;* l'innocent pour le pêcheur ! c'est ce que fait le Père céleste. Non il ne nous faut pas Barabbas, il nous faut un innocent." [2]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ix. p. 241. [2] *Ibid.* vol. x. p. 40.

Sometimes these notes have reference to some sermon of Bossuet's own, or to some idea elsewhere expressed by him.

Bossuet very rarely tells any anecdote or story in his sermons, as was so generally done among preachers of that date. One of the few exceptions to this is in his great Panégyrique de Saint Joseph, which he himself (according to the Abbé Le Dieu) considered one of the best he ever preached. In that sermon he tells a graceful and touching story from S. Gregory of Tours, concerning a noble husband and wife in Auvergne, who had lived together in perfect purity, till, coming to die, they were buried in different places at some distance one from the other. But, strange to record, they could not endure this separation, even in death, and without interference from mortal hand, suddenly their graves were brought together and united. The peasants around were wont to call these graves "the lovers' graves."[1]

On another occasion Bossuet opened a sermon upon our Lord's words to S. John, "Behold thy Mother," with narrating how "a certain philosopher dying without leaving wherewith to maintain his family, bethought him of making a will, by which he left the care of his wife and children to his most intimate friend, believing, so the historian (Lucian)

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 116.

says, that he could not better do honour to the generosity of one to whom he, dying, left such a proof of confidence." The application of this story is obvious.[1] But I do not remember any other similar instance. Neither does he abound in similes or quaint illustrations, like S. Francis de Sales and others, who continually bring forward all manner of natural parables, and curious bits of historical or physiological parallels—many of them beautiful in themselves, but not in strict accordance with scientific facts. As a whole Bossuet's language is remarkably correct and relevant; earnest and pointed as it constantly is, he very seldom seems to depend upon "raising an effect," and yet there is a force and pathos in many of his utterances which must often have riveted the attention even of the frivolous men and women of Louis XIV.'s Court, and made them, like Felix, tremble. What, for instance, can be grander or more impressive than his Sermon on Death, preached on a Friday in Lent 1666, before the King, when, after beginning in a half mournful satire by the question,—"Dare I crave permission to open a grave before the Court, and will not such fastidious eyes be averted from so gloomy a subject? I do not think, sirs, that Christians ought to refuse to gaze upon this sight with Jesus Christ, for it was to Him that it was

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xi. p. 346.

said, 'Lord, come and see;' see where the body is laid—He it was Who bade move the stone, He in His turn bids us 'Come, and see,'"—he goes on in words which must have fallen with terrible force on those vain, sinful men and women, whose lives seemed moulded on the "reasoning of the ungodly," and who scarce appear to have realised any precept of Holy Writ save the bitter irony of King Solomon, "Come on, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered, let none of us go without his part of voluptuousness, let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place, for this is our portion, and our lot is this?" (Wisd. ii. 6-9.)

"Strange weakness of human nature," Bossuet goes on, "that death is never really present to it, although presented on every side and in every shape. . . . When their fellows die, men are in great haste to bury the inevitable thought of death, as to bury those that are dead. Yet among all earthly passions, one of the strongest is the craving for knowledge, and thanks to that craving, men exhaust themselves in striving to read the secrets of nature. . . . Therefore, Christians, I bid you 'come and see.' Come and see what mortal life is, come and see what man is. You may

marvel that I bid you gaze on death that you may learn what is life; but look into the tomb, and confess that there is no truer interpretation, no more faithful mirror of man's course. The construction of a complex object is never so clearly seen as by the separation of its parts; and truly the union of soul and body leads us to invest the body with more than it really has, and to take somewhat away from the soul; but when they part asunder, and the body returns to the earth, while the soul goes back to God from whence it came, we see what each really is in its simplicity. . . . Come then and behold humanity in the grave of Lazarus; behold alike the end of all your aims and the beginning of all your hopes; behold the dissolution and the renewal of your being; behold the triumph of life even when death seems victorious. 'Come and see.'"

And then, turning to the Sovereign, he bursts forth with the personal address: "Sire, a monarch, even David, pondered these things on his throne: they are worthy of your hearing. 'Behold Thou hast made my days as a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in respect of Thee.' O Eternal King of Ages; Who art ever the Same, Who changest not, Illimitable, Everlasting,—verily mine age is as nothing in Thy Sight; —all that has a limit is as nothing; for when that limit is reached one final instant causes it to be as though it

had never been. Were your days prolonged like those venerable oaks beneath which our ancestors rested, and which yet overshadow us; or heap up what you will of honour, riches, pleasure; what matters it, since the faint fluttering grasp of death will overthrow all your pomp in an instant, as though it were but a child's house of cards? . . . Every vestige will be erased for ever; your flesh will change its nature, your body will be called by another name, and, as Tertullian says, 'even that of corpse will not long cleave to it; it will soon become a something which has no name in any tongue.'[1] What of a truth, O great God, is my substance? I do but enter upon life to quit it; like my fellow-men, I appear only to disappear. Everything speaks to us of death. Nature herself, as though well-nigh envious of the gift she gave us, is for ever reminding us that the little heap of material clay she lends us is but for a brief season ours; that she will soon reclaim it—it is not to remain long in the same hands, she needs it for other forms. This perpetual renewing of the human race, the ever-rising generation who shove us aside and assert their turn, warns us how, even as we see one generation pass, another will see us pass, and

[1] "Post totum ignobilitatis elogium, caducæ in originem terram, et cadaveris nomen; et de isto quoque nomine perituræ in nullum inde jam nomen, in omnis jam vocabuli mortem."—*De Resurrect.* ii. 4.

they in like wise must do the same. My God, what are we! If I look before me, how fearful the infinity where I am not! if I look backward, how vast the space where equally I am not! and what a mere speck I fill in this boundless abyss of time! Nothing! That brief interval can scarcely separate me from nothingness. I was sent as one of many,—I was not needed, and the world's tragedy were no less played out had I never appeared upon its theatre! Follow out a yet closer chain of thought, and you will see that it is not even the compass of your whole life which divides you from this nothingness—it is never more than one brief moment. Now we possess that moment—as I speak it passes away, and with it we too should pass did we not unconsciously seize hold of the next, and so on, until at last a moment will come to which we cannot cleave, howsoever earnestly we reach forth, and then we fall. . . . Truly mine age is as nothing in respect of Thee!"

What can be more suggestive than the startlingly graphic sentence in which, after proving that man's weak body could never maintain his pre-eminence in creation were it not for the Inbreathing of the Holy Spirit, the Image of God, the ray from His Face, which conveys a superiority to all the rest of nature, he goes on to describe the soul, plunged within its material shell, wedded so indissolubly to all the pas-

sions of that body, failing, maddened, desperate when that body suffers, yet perceiving by some invisible light that it nevertheless has its own inherent happiness?—"so that there are times when, reckless of all that fills the senses, the passions, of well-nigh all that appertains to the nature of man, the soul can and does cry out, 'To die is gain! I rejoice in my sufferings!' (Col. i. 24.) Surely this is indeed a ray from God's Own Countenance, which kindles that inner light within the soul, and proves that there is somewhat in man which cannot die, since God has made him capable of finding happiness even in death!"

How must such words have fallen on the cold pride, the hard indifference, the resolute self-seeking of many who surrounded the monarch to whom such burning words were uttered! How many turned away, cold, hard, voluptuous still? And to how many was the restless thought that would not be hushed, suggested, until, as in Louise de la Vallière,[1] it should work out the blessed fruits of repentance? Man will never know until the Judgment Day unfolds all secrets.

[1] It was in that same year, 1666, that Mme. de la Vallière gave birth to her daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois, afterwards Princesse de Conti, and also lost her first child, Louis de Bourbon.

## CHAPTER III.

### BOSSUET IN PARIS.

BOSSUET'S DWELLING AND FRIENDS—DEATH OF THE DUC DE FOIX—EXPOSITION DE LA DOCTRINE CATHOLIQUE—TURENNE—PANÉGYRIQUES—BOSSUET RESIGNS THE ARCHDEACONRY OF METZ TO HIS FATHER—PRIORY OF GASSICOURT—DEATH OF BISHOP BÉDACIER—PORT-ROYAL—JANSENIUS—THE FIVE PROPOSITIONS—THE ARNAULDS—ARCHBISHOP PÉRÉFIXE—DEATH OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA—NICOLE'S PERPETUITÉ DE LA FOI—THE MONS TESTAMENT—LETTERS TO THE MARÉCHAL DE BELLEFONDS—FACULTY OF THEOLOGY—BOSSUET APPOINTED BISHOP OF CONDOM—QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA OF ENGLAND—HER ESCAPE TO FRANCE—MURDER OF CHARLES I.—THE QUEEN'S DEATH—HER FUNERAL ORATION—HENRIETTE D'ANGLETERRE, DUCHESS OF ORLÉANS, BECOMES BOSSUET'S PUPIL—HER SUDDEN DEATH—HER FUNERAL ORATION—IMPRESSION ON THE PARIS WORLD—MADAME DE LA VALLIÈRE.

THESE years of Court popularity and fame, when Bossuet was at the height of his vigour and intellectual power, were spent at the Doyenné de Saint Thomas du Louvre, where he lived with the Abbé Lameth, its *doyen*, afterwards Curé of Saint Eustache. They had been college friends, and their friendship never slackened. To that quiet home

Bossuet could retire from the bustle and glare of the Paris world, and steep his soul in devotion and his favourite studies amid the companionship of congenial minds. His chief associates at this time seem to have been du Plessis de la Brunetière, afterwards Bishop of Saintes, d'Hoquincourt, later on Bishop of Verdun, Tallemant, S. Laurent, and a few others, all like himself ardent in their Master's service. His association with the great world amidst which he lived seems to have been connected with religious duties only. He was the intimate friend and director of the Duc de Foix, and when in 1665 this young noble sickened of small-pox, and sent for Bossuet, he did not hesitate, but excusing himself to the King, before whom he was to have preached the coming Advent station, he hastened to the desolate patient (the young Duchess [1] had died but a few months before), and remained with him to the last, soothing his great sufferings with all the consolations of religion.

It was during his residence at Saint Thomas du Louvre that Bossuet wrote his "Exposition de la Doctrine Catholique," [2] which he was partly induced to write in consequence of the influence his refutation of Paul Ferry had had among the Protestants of Metz, and

[1] Madeleine d'Ailly, who died in giving birth to her first child, August 3, 1665, at the age of seventeen.

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. xiii.

partly for the more immediate benefit and instruction of de Dangeau, a grandson of Duplessis Mornay, who became a Catholic in 1668. It had also a great share in bringing Turenne from out the errors of Calvinism,[1] and at the ripe age of fifty-seven, the great General submitted himself as a meek disciple to be instructed in the mysteries of the faith by one whom he owned for a greater captain in a nobler warfare than that in which he had won his own laurels. The "Exposition" was for some time circulated in MS. only, and it was not till 1671 that Bossuet was induced by Turenne himself to publish it. It was translated into Latin by the historian Fleury.

At this time Bossuet preached several of his celebrated "Panégyriques," as they were called, or sermons on some particular historical personage. One of these, on S. Andrew, was spoken before Turenne soon after his conversion (November 30, 1668), and made a deep impression on him. In it the preacher spoke a sentence which has comforted many a drooping heart:—"When God intends to show that any

[1] Turenne was greatly impressed by an occurrence in February 1661, when a great fire threatening to destroy the Louvre, the Blessed Sacrament was carried from Saint Germain l'Auxerrois to the spot, accompanied by the King and various grandees. The fire was immediately quenched, and Turenne was heard exclaiming, "Je l'ai vu, je n'en saurais douter, je l'ai vu."—FLOQUET, *Études*, vol. iii. p. 205.

work is solely His, He lets helplessness and despair overpower us, *and then He acts.*"[1]

People marvelled all these years that so distinguished a man was not fixed at Paris by some honourable appointment, and, as is the way of the world, it was reported that Bossuet was to fill almost every post of importance that fell vacant. The cure of Saint Eustache was offered to him, but he managed to get the appointment transferred to his friend the Abbé de la Met, Dean of Saint Thomas du Louvre, who, he said, was older and worthier than himself. So too, when a vacancy seemed about to occur at Saint Sulpice, Henri de Bourbon (who, though no longer titular Bishop of Metz, was still Abbot of Saint Germain-des-Prés, and as such had the appointment of the Curé of Saint Sulpice) proposed to give it to Bossuet. But the actual Curé, de Poussé, recovered from his dangerous illness, and before a vacancy was made Bossuet was otherwise engaged. Mgr. Bédacier had resigned the Priory of Gassicourt to him, and this Bossuet retained until just before his death (it was worth six thousand livres of yearly income); but he was not ambitious either of dignities or money, and when in 1662 the Deanery of Metz became vacant, and the King recom-

[1] "Quand Dieu veut faire voir qu'un ouvrage est tout de sa main, il réduit tout à l'impuissance et au désespoir, puis Il agit."—*Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 6.

mended the Chapter to elect their Archdiacre, which they proceeded to do, he declined in favour of an old Canon Royer, who greatly desired the post.[1] He, however, only lived two years, and in September 1664 Bossuet succeeded him by unanimous election, only one vote not being for him, and that one was his own; and curiously enough, at the same time he resigned the Archdeaconry of Metz to his father, who, having become a widower, had received Deacon's Orders. Bossuet was not installed until August 22, 1665, and immediately afterwards he conducted his father to his stall, and inducted him as Archdeacon, for which office Priest's Orders were not necessary. The Register of the Chapter of Metz speaks of the Dean as "Os Capituli." The old man died in September 1667. Bossuet was at Metz at the time, and just about to preach in the Cathedral, when tidings were brought him that his father had been seized with apoplexy. He desired that the congregation might be informed, and immediately went to his father, to whom he administered the last Sacraments, and received his parting breath.

The Bishop of Augustopolis was already dead; he died October 19, 1660, while on a journey between

[1] Le Dieu says that he wrote to Bossuet, saying, "Laissez-moi, par grâce, passer avant vous, je suis vieux, vous êtes jeune;—vous viendrez après moi au doyenné, et dans peu de temps, car je vous promets de ne le point retenir plus de deux années."

Paris and Metz. He was taken ill at Chateau-Thierry, and wrote off immediately to entreat Bossuet to come and soothe his last moments. But, like many another eminent literary man, Bossuet had a bad habit of neglecting to open his letters regularly, and amid the press of his engagements poor Bishop Bédacier's letter remained unopened for several days. Fortunately for Bossuet's peace of mind, the error was rectified while there was yet time for him to travel to Charmel, where the Bishop had been removed by the Comte de Charmel;—to find his old friend alive, and to minister to his last hours; and after this loss Bossuet was even more constant than he had been before in returning to Metz as often as the repeated claims on his oratory admitted. These claims were continually becoming more urgent. The Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Péréfixe,[1] was continually seeking his co-operation and advice, and frequently pressed important work upon him.

About this time, 1664-65, the Archbishop was entangled in a very troublesome and perplexing warfare with Port-Royal. The celebrated "Five Propositions," supposed to be found in Jansenius's "Augustinus" (it was not directly stated in the bull of condemnation that they were taken from it), had been condemned; the Jesuits were vehement in pressing

[1] He had been tutor to Louis XIV., and was the author of the "Vie de Henri IV."

their rejection on all good Catholics. In 1656, Arnauld had been censured, expelled from the Sorbonne, and his works placed on the Index; and in the ardour of the opposing party to crush the so-called Jansenists, no toil, no means, fair or unfair, were spared. All the world talked about Jansen, the "Augustinus," the Five Propositions, and the question of *fait* and *droit*, but it may fairly be believed that but few knew anything at all of what they were talking about. The Port-Royalists as a body resolved that their men should not sign the formulary of submission, or any condemnation of Jansen, but they were less rigid as to the nuns. Angélique Arnauld, however, the disciple of S. Francis de Sales, of Saint-Cyran, and of Singlin, could not see her way to repudiating and condemning teaching which she had learned to regard as the truth, and she took up her position steadily beside the Recluses, as the male members of Port-Royal were called. The troubles grew thicker; in 1660 the Port-Royal schools were dispersed; Arnauld was in hiding.[1]

Angélique Arnauld died in 1661, but most of her nuns followed stedfastly in her steps, and refused to sign the Five Propositions, a determination in

[1] Louis XVI. once said, "I am looking everywhere for M. Arnauld." Boileau answered promptly, "Your Majesty always is lucky—you will not find him."

which they were upheld by Arnauld and Nicole, though others of their friends, such as Singlin and Sainte Beuve would have had them yield. After endless *pourparlers* and attempts on the part of Archbishop Péréfixe to induce the nuns to obey him, and sign the condemnation, he proceeded to the most severe extremities—twelve of the abler and most resolute nuns were seized, and forcibly carried by the *archers du guet* to a convent of the Visitation in Paris, where the amount of pressure put upon the unfortunate women to enforce their subscription seems almost incredible as we follow it.[1]

Various different theologians were let loose upon them, to terrify, persuade, or convince them (it must be confessed that so long as he could reduce them to submission the Archbishop does not seem to have much cared how he did it). Among the great authorities of the day, none stood higher than the Dean of Metz. Amid the seething crowd of Jesuits, Jansenians, Oratorians, Molinists, etc., all raving, intriguing, manœuvring, he stood apart, calm, gentle, and kindly disposed to every one. All parties agreed in respecting his thorough impartiality, his entire independence of interested motives, his absolute sincerity; and the men most opposed to one another in all else agreed in

[1] FLOQUET, *Études*, vol. ii. l. x.

trusting Bossuet.[1] The Archbishop naturally wished to bring so hopeful an influence to bear on the rebellious nuns, and accordingly he requested Bossuet to use his persuasive powers, a request which led to the writing a letter,[2] which in its gentleness, and calm, though learned reasoning, must have fallen very soothingly on the ears of the poor persecuted ladies, after the violent scoldings and threatenings they had undergone. Beginning by telling the Port-Royal nuns that he felt their profession and retirement, as well as their sex, ought to have kept them free from all such discussions as those now harassing the Church on the matter of the Five Propositions, he goes on to put the whole question on the ground of obedience, explaining that they were not asked to condemn any individual,[3] and that it was as a general matter of submitting their will and judgment to the Church and their Archbishop that they were urged to sign the formulary. The leading spirit among the nuns was la Mère Agnes de Saint Paul, a sister of Antoine and Angélique

[1] Arnauld wrote of him in 1694, "Entre tant de grandes qualités que j'admire en M. de Meaux, il n'y en a point qui me paroisse plus extraordinaire qu'un certain fonds de sincerité et d'équité, qui lui fait reconnoître la vérité, qui que ce soit qui la lui propose."

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 210.

[3] "Je me sens obligé de vous avertir, . . . que je n'entends faire aucun préjudice à la personne de Jansenius, lequel on estime tant," etc.—*Ibid.* p. 221.

Arnauld, a woman of marvellous holiness and sweetness, as well as of the most firm and resolute character. Deprived by the Archbishop's orders of the Sacraments, and of all religious consolations, threatened with an unconsecrated burial (she was aged and ill), not allowed to see a priest, taunted and harassed by the nuns, among whom she was an unwilling guest, or rather prisoner (what would S. Francis de Sales have said to such a state of things in one of his Communities !), her meekness and forbearance never failed her, and she managed to restrain the natural resentment of her spiritual child and favourite niece, Sœur Sainte Thérèse, who sometimes was on the point of breaking forth with indignation at the insults and annoyances daily heaped upon one who was to her as a beloved mother. This venerable lady pleaded with Archbishop Péréfixe to allow her the comfort of confession, and suggested the names of three priests, any one of whom she asked to see. The Archbishop believed that all three, though admirable men, had Jansenist leanings, and refused; but then suddenly he exclaimed, "You shall see the Abbé Bossuet,—I implore you, see Bossuet: he is the most learned and gentle man in the world, and just what you want, for he belongs to no party!" The very same day (September 1664) the Dean of Metz visited the poor ladies, who were not predisposed to like him, nevertheless Sœur Sainte Thérèse says in her

Journal that he was "a learned man, *et qui ne s'emporte point;*" and during the frequent kindly visits he paid to the persecuted nuns, he won the esteem and respect of both, and influenced the younger one so that she signed the hated formulary on November 4, 1664, on the understanding that she was making no further expression of opinion than acquiescence in the orders of her superior, the Archbishop. The Mère Agnes, a worthy Arnauld, altogether refused to influence her niece, whom she might certainly have withheld from submission, as she herself refused to submit. Sœur Thérèse expressed her resolution to act as her aunt might act, but the elder woman steadily replied, "No, my child, do not say thus; it is not well so to lean on a fleshly arm. If you believe it right to sign, I shall be in no way troubled, so long as you do it under due guidance." Bossuet was so much touched at the real heroism and grandeur of Mère Agnes, that he shed tears. Madame de Sevigné, writing to the Marquis de Pomponne (an Arnauld), November 17, 1664, alludes to this: "Madame votre sœur, qui est à nos Dames du faubourg a signé le formulaire, elle voit à cette heure la communauté, et paroit fort contente. Madame votre tante ne paroit pas en colère contre elle."[1] But Sœur Thérèse could not be happy under what she had done, and early in 1665 she re-

[1] *Lettres*, vol. i. p. 98. See also p. 105, etc.

tracted, as did the few others who had followed the same course. The nuns were once more together at their monastery "des Champs," and there Bossuet visited them (June 29, 1665), with the Archbishop of Paris, who solemnly announced his intention of removing all the disobedient nuns and dispersing their Community. Sœur Thérèse gave vent to some expression implying—what after all was the simple truth—that the Archbishop persecuted the Port-Royalists. He replied rather angrily, "*Ces messieurs* have written an Apology for you, in which they say that Port-Royal bears the sanguinary marks of my cruelty: one would think I had been cutting your throats!"

"Monseigneur," Sœur Thérèse immediately answered, "such troubles cause the heart to bleed;" and then, catching an expression of tenderness and sympathy on Bossuet's countenance, she added, "If not sanguinary marks, they are at all events very painful and hard to bear. We have been as good as dead to one another for the last ten months, and God only knows all that we have suffered."

"It is true, quite true," burst from Bossuet's lips, whose upright spirit of justice and fairness had evidently suffered under his Archbishop's line of action. This apparently was Bossuet's last appearance among them. He was too independent in character and too generous in heart to be an efficient supporter of Arch-

bishop's Péréfixe's tyranny, and later on, when we consider his own dealings, as one in authority, with rebellious Religious, we shall find a very different course adopted. In 1661, the opening discourse of the Synod of Paris, the first held there since 1620, was committed to the well-known preacher.

One of his most devoted friends at Court—Anne of Austria—was about to pass from the scene of earthly grandeur and turmoil in which she had played so conspicuous a part during a long train of years. This princess, of whom Voltaire says that "her whole career in France had been one of sorrow,"[1] in spite of her talent and many charms; died a suffering death from cancer. This terrible malady began several years earlier. It had always been the one thing which the Queen dreaded most, and at the time when she offered herself to God to bear any sufferings He might please to send, her woman's weakness had prayed that cancer might be excepted. On one occasion, when visiting the sick in a hospital, Anne of Austria left the bedside of a cancer patient hastily, exclaiming, "Seigneur, tout autre fléau que celui là!"[2] The same courage which had upheld her through many a weary struggle during her Regency seems to have endured through the last struggle with bodily pain and weak-

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. 46.

[2] Floquet, vol. ii. p. 267.

ness, which continued for some time. Bossuet and his old friend the Maréchale de Schomberg were both present at the Queen's deathbed. In January 1664 we find Bossuet preaching at Saint Sulpice on the patron's festival (Jan. 19th) before the Queen-Mother, who had laid the first stone of the new church some years earlier, and after dwelling on the need of due preparation for the last day, he turned to Anne of Austria, saying, "Madam, it beseems your Majesty most seriously to think upon this last day. We turn aside from the thought—your subjects shrink from it, loving in you a mother as well as a Sovereign. But, Madam, however your subjects may fly from the thought, it is necessary that your Majesty should make it your familiar, frequent companion. May your Majesty be so occupied with God, may your heart be so penetrated with the fear of His Judgment, your soul with the awe of His Justice, that you may fitly prepare to give account of the great power committed to you, of all the good you are able to do, of all the evil you can either hinder or remedy; for this God requires of you."[1]

The Queen-Mother died on January 20, 1666, in severe suffering, but bearing it with "heroic patience and the calmness of heavenly resignation." On February 2, the Feast of the Purification, Bossuet, when

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 70.

preaching before the Court on the subject of the day, added a few touching words concerning the royal lady who had been a true friend to him. He spoke of her earnestness in maintaining her son's heritage intact, of her tenderness and charity, and that piety which had led her always to seek to promote God's glory in the country of her adoption; and alluding to her unchanged looks (she was not old, and had preserved her personal attractions in spite of illness), exclaimed, "How have we lost one who did not seem to grow old, and who was untouched by years? How did that strong constitution become so speedily subject to a malignant poison which has baffled all skill? What things of nought we are, and how vain are strength and fair looks, when, while the countenance is yet bright with health and beauty, corruption is so stealthily invading both, that, almost as soon as perceived, it has taken possession of the citadel of life." [1]

Bossuet now thought very seriously of breaking his connection with Paris, and of giving himself up entirely to his work at Metz; but he had too many devoted friends and admirers in the great city for this to be easily accomplished, and he was soon obliged to return to Paris, where the Archbishop (Péréfixe) and the King consented to appoint him Censor of one of the great Port-Royal works which had recently

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xi. p. 287.

appeared, namely Nicole's "Perpetuité de la Foi sur l'Eucharistie." Bossuet revised this book as the several volumes appeared, and the three first volumes (published respectively in 1669, 1671, and 1674) bear his approbation.[1] While engaged in this work Bossuet had several interviews with Arnauld, and expressed himself as gratified at the deference with which Arnauld treated him, while the great Port-Royalist on his side was no less pleased with their intercourse.[2] The result was that Arnauld requested Bossuet to revise the version of the New Testament which had been made by the solitaries of Port-Royal, and which had been somewhat hardly dealt with. The Archbishop and several Bishops having forbidden it to be read (1667), the Council ordered its suppression, and at the same time Pope Clement IX. condemned it officially. Bossuet was an advocate for the Holy Scriptures being circulated in the vernacular, though, of course, he considered it most important that all translations should be authorized, lest the truth should suffer harm; and he saw no reason for the vehement condemnation passed upon the Mons version (so the Port-Royal translation was called). In a letter to Maréchal de Bellefonds, dated December 1, 1674,

[1] The other two volumes were not published til after Bossuet's death.

[2] Abbé Le Dieu.

Bossuet says: "If the Mons version is in any way to be blamed, it is chiefly for affecting too much finish, and for aiming at a style in the translation which the Holy Spirit did not condescend to impart to the original. . . . The Mons version would have been more reverent and more in conformity with the seriousness of the original if it had been a little more simple, and if the translators had mingled less of their own industry and their own natural intellectual elegance with God's Word. But I do not think it can be said, without too great boldness, that this version need be prohibited."

"I regret," he says in the same letter, "to see people taking up a particular version more for the translator's sake than because it is God's Voice,—more touched by the talent or eloquence of the interpreter than by the thing itself. I would have the Holy Truth of God revered, enjoyed, and loved in the simplest versions."[1]

There were so many imperfect versions of Holy Scripture, Bossuet said,[2] that he earnestly desired one that should be satisfactory, and he greatly wished to see this Mons version so amended as to fill such a place. Accordingly, with the Archbishop's approval, a series of conferences to this end were held at the Hôtel de

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 175.
[2] Abbé Le Dieu.

Longueville, between Bossuet, Arnauld, Nicole, Sacy, and de la Lane; but they had scarcely got through the Epistle to the Romans when Mgr. Péréfixe died (1671), and his successor de Harlay would not allow the work to continue.

In February 1669 the Faculty of Theology of Paris received notice that the King purposed publishing a declaration in order to abolish, or at least restrain, the right of Committimus,—which had been greatly abused, and against which a great outcry had been raised; and inasmuch as their privileges would suffer by such restraint, they pleaded against it, selecting Bossuet as their advocate before the King: and so ably was their cause maintained, that some of the judges, albeit learned men, were much shaken by his arguments. But the cause was a bad one—not even Bossuet's eloquence happily could hinder the necessary reform, and one is glad to think that its use in such a direction was exceptional, and, one would hope, not in harmony with his wishes.

The Queen-Mother had often expressed her intention of appointing Bossuet to one of the sees which fell to her disposal (the King having given her the province of Bretagne as her dower), and this alone, were any such proof required, is enough to refute Voltaire's sneering remark that his funeral oration upon Anne of Austria procured him the Bishopric of

Condom.[1] But he was quite sufficiently known to Louis XIV., the Archbishop of Paris, and indeed to all the world, to make it unnecessary to seek out any other reasons for his appointment to any position in the Church whatsoever. Bossuet chanced to be at Meaux, the guest of his predecessor, de Ligni, then Bishop of that diocese, preaching on the occasion of a *prise d'habit*, when, on September 13th, 1669, a courier arrived, bringing him the letters which contained his appointment to the Diocese of Condom. He was not consecrated at the time, which was one of great interest. Three days before, September 10, 1669, the beautiful, unhappy, heroic Queen of Charles I. of England, breathed her last, "death coming gently to her under the garb of sleep."[2] Her most touching, most romantic history is too well known to most English readers to need repeating. The child of France's great King, Henri IV., she was born, November 25, 1609, shortly before her royal father fell a victim to the traitor Ravaillac's knife, May 14, 1610, thus beginning her life amid scenes of blood and horror, as alas! she was doomed to encounter yet more terrible scenes. Married in 1625 to Charles I., she was a loyal and devoted wife through the long years of trial which the Martyr King endured before

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 108.

[2] *Oraisons Funèbres*, *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 466.

his country degraded itself in the sight of God and man by shedding his blood. There were bright days at first—days when, as her devoted friend Madame de Motteville says, Henrietta Maria used to boast of being "the happiest woman in the world;" the days when Vandyke painted her, and poets sang her charms. But these soon changed to storm, and "the secret abhorrence of all authority and the itching for innovation which stirred the hearts of men,"[1] led to all the miseries of civil war—miseries the cup of which the Queen drank to the dregs. After giving birth to a princess at Exeter, June 16, 1644—who became eventually Duchess of Orléans and the spiritual child of Bossuet—the Queen of England escaped in a Dutch vessel from the inhospitable country which had set a price on her head. A vessel in the Parliament's service fired upon her little ship; but, as she said with reference to an earlier peril, "queens are not made to be drowned,"[2] and she landed safely at Chastel, a rocky cove near Brest. Henrietta Maria's own country gave her a hearty welcome. Anne of Austria, with her two sons, Louis XIV. and the Duke of Orléans, then children, met her on the way to Paris, and supplied her liberally with money and all she could want, until the war of the Fronde reduced them

[1] BOSSUET, *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 453.

[2] "Les reines ne se noyoient pas."—*Ibid.* p. 458.

to an almost equally needy condition. Some historians have written as though the Queen of England had met with miserly treatment from her relatives, but clearly this was not so. All her life Henrietta Maria was noted for her exceeding liberality. Bossuet says, "Elle eut une magnificence royale et l'on eût dit qu'elle perdoit ce qu'elle ne donnoit pas;"[1] and so long as Charles I. lived she could receive nothing that was not immediately sent to him—clothes, jewels, furniture, everything was sold for his benefit. Her eccentric niece Mademoiselle[2] says in her memoirs that, on first coming to Paris, the Queen of England appeared in due royal splendour, but that it all vanished by degrees, and at last her whole *tenû* and personal arrangements were "as mean as possible." In the year 1646, Lady Morton, who had had Charles I.'s youngest child in her keeping ever since its birth, contrived to escape with the little princess and join the Queen, and when the civil war of the Fronde broke out in 1648 they remained in Paris. This was the time of money straits, when, as Bossuet himself says, "Henriette, d'un si grand cœur, est contrainte de demander du secours: Anne, d'un si grand cœur, ne peut en donner assez."[3] The French Court took refuge at Saint-Germain, but Henrietta Maria, who was on most affectionate terms

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 443.
[2] De Montpensier.
[3] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 461.

with the Condé family, went to the Louvre with the express intention of acting as mediatrix between the antagonistic parties. Her experience of the terrors of civil war made her most anxious to induce those she loved on either side to listen to the voice of the peace-maker before it was too late. Voltaire draws a vivid, though disagreeably satirical, picture of the difference of character between the two national wars—the frivolous tone of the one, who made war with "des éclats de rire," "des couplets et des épigrammes,"[1]—and he alludes to the often-told story of Cardinal de Retz's visit to the Queen of England on a snowy Epiphany day of 1648, when he found her fireless, sitting by the bed where she kept the future Duchess of Orléans, for the sake of warmth. Mme. de Motteville says that the Cardinal himself relieved the Queen's wants. An autograph letter found in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg, from Henrietta Maria to the French Ambassador in London, reveals the touching fact that she had that day written to entreat permission to return to England and share her husband's fate, for she knew now that Charles was in the hands of the most bloodthirsty of his subjects. A letter was enclosed to Lord Fairfax, entreating him to help her to see the King her husband "before

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 49, etc.

he be proceeded against by any trial."[1] We may not here dwell on the ever-fresh fascination of the exquisite pathos of that Royal Martyr's death. His mock trial, his unrighteous execution, his hurried burial at Windsor amid the fast-falling snow—all were over, and some ten days had passed by, before his devoted wife learned the reality of her sorrow. Her sanguine character buoyed her up, and when at length Lord Jermyn heard the terrible tidings, and tried to prepare the Queen, she could not be led to see what he wished her to discover. Beleaguered as the royal party was in the Louvre, it was difficult to obtain tidings from the outer world; but now, roused by Lord Jermyn's hints, the Queen induced one of her gentlemen to make an attempt to pass the double line of besiegers, and bring her news from the Court, then at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Père Gamache, the Queen's Confessor, was there, and that evening, when he had said grace after supper, Lord Jermyn entreated him not to retire as usual, but to remain at hand in case the dreadful tidings that she was a widow, and a widow through so fearful a deed of blood, should break upon the unhappy Queen. At length the poor woman could bear her agonising suspense no longer, and detecting at last that those around her had fuller information than she possessed, Henrietta Maria drew the whole

[1] STRICKLAND, *Lives*, vol. v. p. 350.

agonising truth from Lord Jermyn. "She stood," Père Gamache wrote, "motionless as a statue, without words and without tears. To all we could say she was deaf." Her household, appalled at a grief so awful in its silence and stillness, hung round her, vainly striving to offer comfort or sympathy. At last the Duchesse de Vendôme (wife of Henri IV.'s eldest son by *la belle Gabrielle*, and consequently sister-in-law to Henrietta Maria), to whom the Queen was warmly attached, succeeded in rousing her from the deadly stupor of her crushing grief. Her naturally religious mind led her to seek comfort in devotion, and Henrietta Maria retired to the Carmelite Convent in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. Mme. de Motteville has recorded the touching messages sent by the desolate widow to her royal sister, Anne of Austria, to the effect that "King Charles, her Lord, whose death had made her the most sorrowful woman on the wide earth, had been lost because none of those in whom he trusted had told him the truth; that a people, when irritated, becomes like an infuriate wild beast whose rage nothing can moderate; and she prayed that the Queen Regent might be more fortunate in France than she and King Charles had been in England. But, above all, she counselled Anne of Austria to hear the truth, and to labour to discover it, for "she believed that the greatest evil which could

befall sovereigns was to rest in ignorance of the truth, which ignorance reverses thrones and destroys empires."

With the exception of some visits to England after the Restoration of Charles II., the widowed Queen of England continued to lead a life of retirement and devotion, chiefly at Chaillot, where she founded a Convent of the Visitation, in a large building which had once belonged to Catherine de Medicis. Fresh sorrows awaited her: the young Duke of Gloucester died in September 1660 of small-pox, and in the December following his eldest sister, the Princess of Orange, fell a victim to the same disease; so that when, on March 31, 1661, Henrietta Maria's youngest and favourite child, who had shared so many of her trials, was married to the Duke of Orléans, the marriage was as quiet as Court etiquette allowed. It was not a happy marriage: the young princess was beautiful, vain, and childish, and the Duke of Orléans was not an attractive husband. "Philip of Orléans seemed to have inherited no grace of royal blood. Weak and puny in body, effeminate and cowardly in character, he was incapable of either a noble impulse or a generous action: shunning the society of men to cower amid that of women, he affected their ways; and while lavishing the worthless offering of his cold corrupt heart on all sides, he possessed all the peculiar

jealousy of a man capable of no love save that of self."[1] So writes one of his countrymen. It was a sore trial to the Queen of England, but, as Bossuet says of her, latterly, after all her sorrows and disappointments, she had ceased to feel anything serious save her sins.[2]

In 1661, Henrietta Maria stood as sponsor for the Dauphin, the only child of Louis XIV. and Maria Theresa of Austria, who we shall soon find becoming the pupil of Bossuet. Several visits to England followed. The Queen's health was failing, but her high spirit bore her through much that might have crushed other people. At last she consented to have a consultation of the first physicians, and Varlot, Esprit, and Juelin, respectively first physicians to the King, the Duke and the Duchess of Orléans, met at the Château de Colombe, where the Queen was. They proposed to treat the sharp pain and sleeplessness from which she suffered by means of opium, but Henrietta Maria positively refused to take it, saying that it always disagreed with her, and that her English physician, Dr. Mayerne, had warned her that any considerable dose would be very dangerous to her constitution. The physicians, however, overruled their patient, and she

[1] *Remarques Historiques, Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 468.

[2] "Après tant de maux et tant de traverses, elle ne connut plus d'autres ennemis que ses péchés."—*Ibid.* p. 466.

consented to take the medicine that night. Père Gamache says that the Queen was better than usual that day; she talked and laughed during supper, and ate with more appetite than her wont; and when she went to bed, she fell asleep naturally. However, the lady in waiting roused her and administered the medicine that had been ordered, and then, as the Queen fell asleep again at once, left her till the morning, when, returning with a fresh dose, she found her royal lady totally insensible, and regardless of all the loving cares and words which were speedily showered upon her. The doctors who were fetched said that the coma was temporary, and that Her Majesty would soon recover, and at first Père Gamache believed them; but seeing no change in the state of utter unconsciousness which shrouded his royal penitent, the good Father sent in haste for the Curé of Colombe to administer Extreme Unction. After this the Viaticum was given to the Queen, who was quite able to swallow, and very shortly afterwards she ceased to breathe, her soul passing away without the slightest external struggle or agitation. Henrietta Maria had faced death many a time in the course of the civil wars of both France and England, as also perils by land and water, and that with a brave, unterrified spirit; but she always shrank from the thought of a calm, deliberate death, apart from the *entourage* of danger and excitement: "Je

songe à bien vivre, je ne songe pas à mourir,"[1] she would say, when the subject was pressed upon her; and now those who loved her (and that meant every one who approached her royally generous person) felt that God had dealt very graciously with the Queen in taking her so gently from the world, where she had suffered so much, to the life where her true hopes were set.

Queen Henrietta Maria was buried with all the state due to the daughter, wife, and mother of Kings, at Saint Denis, but the funeral office of most real importance took place later, when, at the request of her daughter, the young Duchess of Orléans, Bossuet pronounced a funeral oration over the royal lady he had known so well during her exile. This service was held at Chaillot on November 16, 1669, in the convent which the Queen had founded. The chapel was decorated with the wonted funeral magnificence of those times, and beneath a gorgeous canopy a wax effigy of the Queen lay; the Duke and Duchess of Orléans, all the English nobility then in France, and many other great names, were gathered there, and there it was that Bossuet spoke the oration which has always been considered a masterpiece of its kind.[2]

[1] *Remarques Historiques*, *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 437.

[2] "Penché comme au bord des gouffres de l'éternité, Bossuet y laisse tomber sans cesse ces grands mots de *temps* et de *mort*,

There is always something jarring to the Christian's sense of reality in pouring out laudation and panegyric on those who are gone far beyond its reach to receive God's judgment, and not even Bossuet's eloquence can altogether do away with this feeling; but it must be granted that he sinks the mere panegyric of the Queen as far as the exigencies of the time and public feeling would allow, and strives to bring out the character of the Christian, tried and purified by suffering, rather than the Sovereign's dignity.

"Combien de fois," he exclaims, "a-t-elle en ce lieu remercié Dieu humblement de deux grandes graces: l'une, de l'avoir fait chrétienne; l'autre,

qui vont troublant de leur chute tous ces abymes silencieux. . . . Jamais les rois ont-ils reçu de pareilles leçons? jamais la philosophie s'exprima-t-elle avec plus d'indépendance? Le diadème n'est rien aux yeux de l'orateur; par lui, le pauvre est égalé au monarque, et le potentat le plus absolu du globe est obligé de s'entendre dire, devant des milliers de temoins, que toutes ses grandeurs ne sont que vanité, que sa puissance n'est que songe, qu'il n'est lui-même que poussière, et que ce qu'il prend pour un trône, n'est en effet qu'un tombeau. . . . L'Évêque de Meaux a crée une langue que lui seul a parlée, où souvent le terme le plus simple, et l'idée la plus relevée, l'expression la plus commune et l'image le plus terrible, servent, comme dans l'Écriture, à se donner des dimensions énormes et frappantes. . . . Toutes les Oraisons funèbres de Bossuet ne sont pas d'un égal mérite, mais toutes sont sublimes par quelque côté. Celle de la Reine d'Angleterre est un chef-d'œuvre de style et un modèle d'écrit philosophique et politique."—CHATEAUBRIAND, *Génie du Christianisme*, Pt. iii. L. iv. p. 307.

—messieurs, qu'attendez vous? Peut-être d'avoir rétabli les affaires du Roi son fils? Non : *c'est de l'avoir fait reine malheureuse.*"[1]

After King Charles's murder, Cromwell had caused a medal to be struck bearing the inscription "Et nunc, Reges intelligite;" and now Bossuet took the same words, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be learned, ye that are judges of the earth" (Psa. ii. 10), as the text of his Oration, drawing out, in his opening passages, how it is God Himself that is the Teacher of Kings, and how, through "every extremity of human events," He had taught the Royal Lady for whom they mourned.[2] It is through the sharpness of the Cross of suffering that sin is atoned for, intentions purified, earthly desires changed to heavenly longings; that the world's charms become savourless; that self-reliance and pride shrivel up and cease to be. "We forgive ourselves so easily," Bossuet exclaims, "when fortune forgives us! and it is so easy to believe ourselves

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 463.

[2] Vous verrez dans une seule vie toutes les extrémités des choses humaines; la felicité sans bornes, aussi bien que les misères; . . . Voilà les enseignemens que Dieu donne aux rois : ainsi fait-il voir au monde le néant de ses pompes et de ses grandeurs. Si les paroles nous manquent . . . les choses parleront assez d'elles-mêmes . . . et s'il n'est pas permis aux particuliers de faire des leçons aux princes sur des événements si étranges, un Roi me prête ses paroles pour leur dire, *Et nunc Regis, intelligite; erudimini, qui judicatis terram.*"—*Ibid.* p. 440.

skilful and enlightened above all other men, when we are the most conspicuous and most fortunate among them! Reverses are the only instructors who can rebuke us profitably, and wrest from us the confession of failure, so hard for pride to make. But when misfortune opens our eyes, we review our errors in bitterness of heart: we are overwhelmed alike by what we have done and left undone, and we no longer see how to defend that presumptuous wisdom which once we believed infallible. We see that God Alone is All Wise; and while vainly deploring the mistakes which have ruined our earthly prosperity, a happier contrition teaches us to mourn over those which concern eternity, with this most blessed difference, that these are repaired even while we weep for them."[1]

This funeral oration was published at the earnest request of the young Duchess of Orléans, who—having, of course, known Bossuet during the past years of his constant preaching before the Court—now drew to him with the strong preference of a warm young heart. Henriette d'Angleterre's married life was not a happy one, as has already been said, and with such a husband as the contemptible, worthless Duke Philippe, the temptations which crowded around a beautiful, fascinating, clever, and indiscreet girl of seventeen were inevitably great. Very shortly

[1] *Ibid.* p. 464.

after their marriage, the Queen Mother complained very harshly of her young daughter-in-law, both to Henrietta Maria and Lord Jermyn.[1] Louis XIV. himself paid a dangerous attention to his lovely sister-in-law, though even Voltaire, who delights in scandal, affirms that Henriette exercised great discretion in this case.[2] Still the young Duchess of Orléans was the life of the French Court: the reigning Queen was a good woman, but dull and stiffened with Spanish etiquette, and all the charms, all the grace of that pleasure-loving Court lay with Madame.[3] All this makes it more remarkable that the young Princess should have turned from all her flatterers and adorers, her dazzling companions—the world of the la Vallières, the Montespans—to the grave society of the new Bishop of Condom. So it was, however, and from the time of her mother's death the Duchess of Orléans saw Bossuet frequently, putting herself under his spiritual guidance, and receiving regular instructions from him three times a week. Bossuet seems to have felt a fatherly interest in the beautiful and (practically) unprotected young creature who thus threw herself upon his care. He did not restrict himself to spiritual

1 STRICKLAND'S *Lives*, vol. v. p. 453.

2 ". . . le frein qu'elle-même avait mis à son propre penchant, de peur qu'il ne devînt dangereux."—*Siècle de Louis XIV.* vol. i. p. 403.

3 *Lettres de Mme. de Sevigné*, vol. i. p. 261; vol. ii. p. 189.

instructions, but, finding how very imperfect Madame's general education had been, and holding as he ever did, that a knowledge of general literature, and history in particular, is invaluable to Royal personages, he led her to improve herself by reading, and himself directed her historical studies, in which her naturally quick perceptions soon found a vivid interest. All this was interrupted by politics. A secret negotiation was carried on during the spring of 1670 between the Kings of France and England, Louis XIV. desiring to detach the latter from his alliance with Holland; and to this end he employed his fascinating sister-in-law as plenipotentiary with her own brother Charles II. It was on this occasion that the Duchess of Orléans took to England her lady-in-waiting, Mademoiselle de Kéroual, better known as the notorious Duchess of Portsmouth, who established so firm a hold over the passions of the weak King of England, and ruled him so unhappily.

Henriette d'Angleterre proved herself a successful Ambassadress, and had returned triumphant, and surrounded with all that homage and admiration could give.[1] There was one drawback—the jealousy and violence of her husband. The Duke of Orléans had followed her to England, and these first few days after

[1] "Le plaisir et la considération que donnent les affaires se joignant en elle aux agrémens que donnent la jeunesse et la

their return were marred by painful and degrading scenes between the royal pair. Suffering from one of these harassing discussions, and feeling ill, the Duchess, who was then at Saint Cloud, drank, on the evening of June 29, 1679, a glass of chicory-water, such as she was in the habit of taking; but before finishing the draught she exclaimed that she was poisoned, and begged that the glass of water might be examined! In a moment the Duchess retracted this order, but she repeated the assertion that she was dying. The Duke and some of the ladies present drank the remainder of the bottle's contents, in order to reassure her, and she made no further allusion to poison, except to say to the Maréchal de Grammont that she had thought for the moment that she had been accidentally poisoned. At first the seriousness of the attack did not seem to have been perceived by those around. "Madame lay on a little bed, dishevelled, pale, looking like a corpse, and every one was coming and going in and out of the room, gossipping and laughing," says Mademoiselle de Montpensier. But Madame herself never altered in her belief that the hand of death was upon her, and, as Bossuet touchingly says, "un regret immense de ses

beauté, il y avait une grace et une douceur répandues dans toute sa personne qui lui attiroient une sorte d'hommage, qui devoit lui être d'autant plus agréable qu'on le rendoit plus à la personne qu'au rang."—*Mémoires de Mme. de Lafayette.*

péchés ne lui permit pas de regretter autre chose."[1] She asked for the crucifix which Anne of Austria had used on her deathbed, and, receiving it, exclaimed, "O my God, why have I not always put all my trust in Thee?" Madame also asked for the last Sacraments to be given her, as too that Bossuet might be fetched. "Monsieur de Condom! Monsieur de Condom!" she kept exclaiming, expressing her wish "to die in his hands."

Meanwhile, in order not to lose time, the Duchess's ordinary Confessor, P. Chrysostome d'Amiens (of whom her husband said that he was "of no use at all but to look well as the Duchess's Confessor sitting in her carriage!"), and also a neighbouring priest were fetched — a Canon of Saint Cloud named Feuillet, a rough, harsh man—who began by reproaching the dying Princess with her past pleasures and luxuries, accusing her of having no love save for the world and its good things, and frightening only where he should have ministered hope and comfort as well as stimulated penitence. Henriette did not resent this harsh treatment, but she was crushed and appalled by it. The King had just visited her, and was astonished at the calm fortitude she showed. Apparently he was the first to realise that the Duchess really was, as she told them, dying; and, after he had

[1] *Oraison Funèbre*, *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 492.

said so, the doctors admitted the fact. Meanwhile the first messenger sent to Paris for Bossuet had not found him: Madame's agonies and her consciousness that death was drawing momentarily nearer led her to cry out earnestly for the priest whose fatherly tenderness had won her, and from whom she now craved that consolation which the harder Canon Feuillet had not given her. The Duke despatched a second and a third messenger, and at last, to her great satisfaction and the relief of all the bystanders, Bossuet arrived. As he came to her bedside, she exclaimed faintly, "Ah! Monsieur, I have sought salvation too late!" The Bishop's tears were falling fast at the sight of this beautiful young creature, towards whom he had acted so fatherly a part, thus suddenly called upon to die, and that in such agony. Commanding his emotion, however, he answered, "Hope, Madame, hope."

"I have it to the uttermost," Henriette answered; "I submit to God's Will, I am willing to die, I hope in His Mercy." Then, kneeling by her side, the Bishop repeated out loud acts of faith, hope, and charity; after which he poured forth eloquent words of the Christian's high and holy confidence in Him Who never turns a deaf ear to the cry of His children, and peace seemed to come back as he spoke to the dying princess, while all around hung spell-bound by his words, which seemed to bring a new and heavenly

atmosphere into the chamber of death.[1] Canon Feuillet himself, who was present, expressed later on his own strong sense of the contrast between his method of dealing with such conditions and that of the Bishop of Condom, greatly to the benefit, one might hope, of those at whose deathbeds he assisted in future.[2]

Madame de Lafayette, who was present throughout, says that during a short respite from pain, the Duchess spoke to her waiting-maid in English, and bade her, after her death, give the Bishop a ring which Henriette had lately had made for him. Then she asked her husband's forgiveness, declaring at the same time that she had never been faithless to him. Bossuet reminded her that those who filled so exalted a station as she had done owed much to others in the way of example, especially when in God's House and at His Altar. "Do you," he asked, "ask His forgiveness for every irreverence of which you have ever been guilty, and offer such reparation as is possible?"

"Indeed I do, with all my heart," the Duchess answered.

Her pains became more intense. Bossuet held the

[1] "Il y avait, pour ces tristes occasions, une grâce particulière attachée à ses paroles. Elles sembloient porter le repentir et la confiance dans ces cœurs, l'oubli même, et le mépris de la vie." —*Oraison Funèbre de Bossuet, P. de la Rue.*

[2] Floquet, vol. iii. p. 397.

crucifix to her, saying, "Behold our Lord Jesus Christ opening His Arms to you. It is He Who gives you eternal life, He Who will one day raise again this poor body which now suffers so terribly."

"I believe it, I believe it," she replied, while her feeble hand could scarce guide it to her lips; but she held it there lovingly. A few moments more and she whispered, "I am just dying."

"Madame, you believe in God, you hope in Him, you love Him?" Bossuet asked.

"With all my heart," Henrietta replied. They were her last words. She expired at 3 A.M., June 30, 1670, after nine hours of intense suffering.[1]

The question of poison was a terrible one: the Duchess's death was so sudden, and took every one so by surprise, that perhaps in those days, when crime, for an object, was looked upon almost as a matter of course, it was hardly to be wondered at that, after the cry, "Madame se meurt!" and a few hours later, "Madame est morte!"[2] foul play was suspected. Both

[1] Madame de Sevigné writes: "Il vous dira la mort de Madame, c'est à dire, l'étonnement où l'on a été en apprenant qu'elle a été malade et morte en huit heures, et qu'on perdoit avec elle toute la joie, tout l'agrément et tous les plaisirs de la Cour."—*Lettres*, vol. i. p. 261.

[2] "Les cœurs, après plus d'un siècle, retentissent encore du fameux cri, Madame se meurt, Madame est morte!"—*Génie du Christianisme*, Pt. iii. L. iv. p. 306.

in France and England the report was believed; Voltaire, indeed, says that the whole Court, the English Ambassador, and all Europe credited it. A former servant of the Duke of Orléans told Voltaire the name of the man who, according to his story, administered the poison, which he affirmed to be powdered diamond dust! But Voltaire denies the truth of the assertion, while he retails some Court gossip which he says was the cause of all these "odious rumours."[1] He says that the Duchess had been very much out of health for some time, and was suffering from abscess in the liver at the time of her death; and Bossuet records that in a post mortem examination, at which a large number of surgeons and others assisted, proof positive of a natural death was obtained, independently of the fact that the Duke and others had finished drinking the chicory water which had been given to the Duchess.

Bossuet went to the Duke to tell him of his wife's death: he had been removed from her room in a state of abject misery, probably as much from sheer cowardly terror of death as from affection for her. His mean, selfish nature asserted itself on every occasion; even when requested by her to summon the Bishop of Condom to what she felt was her deathbed, he did so with the remark that the Bishop's name would look well in

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 427.

the Gazette !"[1] This contemptible prince had two daughters by Henriette d'Angleterre,—Marie Louise, who married Charles II. of Spain in 1679, and Anne Marie, who married Victor Amadeo, Duke of Savoy, afterwards King of Sardinia. In 1671 he married again—the Princess Elisabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, daughter of the Elector Palatine; and Madame de Sevigné says of the marriage: "You can fancy how Monsieur is to have a grand ceremonial marriage, and also a wife who does not understand French. . . . Alas! if this Madame could in any way replace her whom we have lost!"[2] From this second marriage the present Orléans family is descended, Philippe Égalité being the grandson, and Louis Philippe great-grandson of the widower of Henriette d'Angleterre.

The same morning, after the Duchess's death, Bossuet went to Versailles to inform Louis XIV., who was much distressed, and for the moment impressed, by his beautiful sister-in-law's sudden death. Two days later he gave the Bishop of Condom the ring already mentioned, which she had made ready to give him. It was a valuable emerald, and Bossuet wore it all his life. Not long after his death, his nephew, the Bishop of Troyes, who might have been expected to

[1] *Remarques Historiques*, vol. ii. p. 470.
[2] *Lettres*, vol. ii. p. 189.

value such a jewel if he did not value his uncle's sermons, sold it by public auction.

The King himself requested Bossuet to preach the funeral oration of his late spiritual child, and it was not a task he could refuse, although, when the commission was given, he was greatly shaken by the scenes he had just witnessed. It was not, however, till August 21 that the ceremony took place at Saint Denis, that once celebrated resting-place of so many royalties, so cruelly desecrated during the great Revolution. Bossuet appeared on this occasion for the first time in his episcopal robes; the whole Court seems to have been present, with the exception of Louis XIV. himself; but his Queen, Marie Thérèse, was there, the Grand Condé and his son, the Duc d'Enghien, and a vast body of Clergy, Cardinals, Bishops, and Priests, gathered together for the Assembly General, besides many English noblemen and others.

"Bossuet's genius had been conspicuous in his funeral oration over the Queen of England," says Cardinal de Bausset,[1] "but he put forth the whole tenderness of his soul in that spoken over her daughter;" and even Voltaire admits that it had "the greatest and rarest of successes—that of making the Court weep. Bossuet was forced to pause after uttering the words, 'Woeful night, when, like a thunder-clap, the startling news was

[1] *Vie*, vol. i. p. 248.

spread abroad, *Madame is dying, Madame is dead;'* and the whole audience burst into sobs, while the orator's own voice was choked with tears." [1]

The oration must be read as a whole to appreciate the pathos, the earnestness and eloquence with which it abounds. "Vanitas vanitatum,"—the fitting text; and yet, while pressing on his listeners that "health is but a name, life but a dream, glory but a shadow, pleasure and delight but a perilous gleam," he guards against the error of imagining that "life is a thing to be despised, a mere game of chance, in which man may go heedlessly on as the tide drifts him. . . . All is vanity in man, if we take him on the worldly side, but, on the contrary, all is real and weighty, if we look at him as with respect to God."

"Greatness and glory!" Bossuet exclaims, after rehearsing some of the late political events of his country, and referring to the diplomatic offices the dead Princess had rendered to Louis XIV. "Greatness and glory! Dare we utter such words in the presence of death, triumphant over both! No, of a truth, sirs, I dare not employ those proud names, with which human arrogance strives to deaden the sense of its own nothingness. It behoves us now to perceive that whatsoever is mortal, let it be decked with all external greatness that can be devised, is never-

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 108.

theless intrinsically devoid of grandeur. Hearken to the words—not of a philosopher or a scholiast, not of a monk meditating in his cloister; rather would I confound the world's reasoning by the mouth of those whom the world esteems most highly, by those who know it best:—I will use no argument save one which comes from a royal throne. It is a King who cries out, 'Thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in respect of Thee.'[1] So it is, Christians: all that can be measured comes to an end, and all that is born to end can scarce be said to have left the nothingness wherein it is so soon again to sink. If our being, our substance, is nought, whatsoever we build thereon, what is it? The building is not firmer than the foundation, nor the accidents of position greater than the being around whom they cling. Since nature keeps us so low, what can fortune do to raise us? Consider the most notable distinctions which divide men—there is none more marked or more telling than that which raises a conqueror over those who lie conquered beneath his feet. Yet that conqueror, glorying in his title, must needs himself fall conquered by death."

And so he goes on awhile—then suddenly turning to the immediate subject, Bossuet describes the last scenes, which were as yet so startlingly familiar to the

[1] Psa. xxxix. 6. In the Vulgate it is "*substantia mea.*"

courtiers gathered round him: that disastrous night when the cry, "Madame is dying! Madame is dead!" re-echoed through the land, and, apart from personal feeling, those pleasure-loving, self-seeking men and women were forced to face the unwelcome truth that neither youth, nor beauty, nor greatness could avert or delay the hand of Death for one hour! "Most frequently," Bossuet said, "the change comes gradually, and death sends warnings before the final blow. But Madame passed at once from morning to evening, like the flowers of the field. The forcible language of Holy Scripture, 'in the morning it is green and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withered,' was literally fulfilled in her." And then, after dwelling upon her loving and attractive qualities (which, apart from any deathbed panegyrics, were clearly at all times great[1]), he touchingly adds, "Madame met death gently and sweetly as she had ever met all else. . . . But what matters it if her life was short? That which must end can never be long. . . ." And the true Priest's heart comes forth in his cry, "I trust for her to that Mercy to which she appealed so heartily and so humbly;" followed by the warning to those who listened,—"As you gaze upon

1 "Elle gagnoit tous les cœurs, c'est-à-dire la seule chose qu'ont à gagner ceux à qui la naissance et la fortune semblent tout donner."—*Oraison Fun.*, vol. xii. p. 495.

these courtly places where she no longer moves, remember that the glories you admire were her greatest dangers in this life, and that in the next she has to undergo a strict examination concerning them, when nought can avail her save her full resignation to God's Holy Will and her deep and humble penitence."

For the moment that giddy, voluptuous world of Paris seems to have been staggered and impressed;—even the profligate de Bussy wrote, on July 10, 1670: "If anything can detach those who love the world best from it, it would be the thoughts which this death arouses."[1] But the tone in which he proceeds does not convey the impression that the Comte de Bussy was so detached himself, whatever "thoughts" his intellect might suggest! The medley of surface and excitement-loving religion with actual unbelief and profligacy—the listening as to an opera singer to Bossuet or "le Père Bourdaloue qui prêche divinement bien aux Tuileries"[2]—while persons whose very names it was a disgrace to mention were received and caressed—comes out forcibly in all contemporary records. Yet in the midst of those garish, sickening scenes of brilliant vice, there were spots whereon the healing shadow rested, where the good seed did not dry up and wither without taking any root. Among these we may reckon the beautiful and erring Louise

[1] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. i. p. 263. [2] *Ibid*, vol. i. p. 279.

de la Vallière, who had been appointed a maid of honour, in 1661, to the Duchess of Orléans, and whose loathing for her own sinful life, and longing to escape from it, were doubtless quickened by the shock of her royal mistress's death. It was in the year following that she made a desperate effort to escape from the trammels and temptations of her brilliant position, which was scarcely looked upon as disgraceful by those around; and escaping to the Convent of the Visitation at Chaillot, she would probably have devoted herself at once to the life of penitence she adopted a short time later, had not the King sent Colbert to fetch her back forcibly. Twice this happened while the impressions of Henriette d'Angleterre's early death were vivid. But it is a subject to which we shall have to return later.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BOSSUET PRECEPTOR TO THE DAUPHIN.

DEATH OF PRESIDENT DE PÉRIGNY—BOSSUET APPOINTED IN HIS PLACE—HIS DIFFICULTIES AS TO THE SEE OF CONDOM—HIS CONSECRATION—RESIGNATION OF THE SEE—PECUNIARY DIFFICULTIES—THE DAUPHIN—BOSSUET'S VIEWS AS TO HIS EDUCATION—RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION—CLASSICAL—BOSSUET'S LOVE OF HOMER—CONVERSATION WITH THE BISHOP OF AUTUN—VIRGIL—HISTORY—LETTER TO POPE INNOCENT CONCERNING THE DAUPHIN'S EDUCATION—PÈRE GRATRY'S CRITICISMS OF BOSSUET'S PHILOSOPHY—TRAITÉ DE LA PHILOSOPHIE—LA LOGIQUE—DU LIBRE ARBITRE—HISTOIRE UNIVERSELLE—POLITIQUE SACRÉE—MARRIAGE OF THE DAUPHIN—HIS CHARACTER—BOSSUET APPOINTED CHAPLAIN TO THE DAUPHINESS—HER DESCRIPTION BY MME. DE SEVIGNÉ—BIRTH OF THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE—DEATH OF THE DAUPHINESS—THE DAUPHIN'S SECOND MARRIAGE—WARS—HIS DEATH—HIS COLDNESS AND SLACKNESS TOWARDS BOSSUET.

MEANWHILE a fresh tie between Bossuet and the Court was about to be formed. In September 1670 the Président de Périgny, Preceptor to the Dauphin, died. At the time of this nobleman's appointment, two years earlier, there had been a strong feeling among the public that Bossuet was the right man to hold so important an office. In 1665 Colbert had commissioned his brother, the Bishop of Luçon,

to furnish a list of the ecclesiastics in France best suited to the post, and he had given Bossuet a high place in it, saying of him, "L'Abbé Bossuet, a doctor of Navarre, has shown his talent by his preaching, which is of a class not easily sustained. He teaches an austere but most Christian doctrine, and those who know him are aware that his life is in accordance with what he preaches. I have always considered him a very able man, and I know him to be a very good one. His countenance tells the truth—it is very *spiritual;* his manners are modest, cheerful, and taking: in short, I know nothing but what is good of him."[1] The Archbishop of Paris, the minister Le Tellier, and others, had pressed his merits upon the King, although Bossuet himself refused to take any steps to obtain the appointment; and the Duc de Montausier, Governor to the Dauphin, urging the claims of M. de Périgny, who was already reader to the King, Louis XIV. gave it to him. The Duc de Montausier was a worthy and upright man. "I am very glad that he is the Dauphin's governor," Mme. de Sevigné wrote, on hearing of his appointment, Sept. 4, 1668; "there is no one in France I would sooner see holding it, except myself!"[2] Mme. de Sevigné tells a story of him, to the effect that one day the Duke was explaining the Cardinalate to the Dauphin,

[1] Floquet, vol. iii. p. 10.

[2] *Lettres*, vol. i. p. 212.

and told him that that dignity depended entirely on the Pope, who could make his groom a Cardinal if he pleased! Just then Cardinal de Bonzi appeared, and the Dauphin appealed to him. "Sir, is it true that, if the Pope chooses, he can make his groom a Cardinal?" De Bonzi was amazed; but guessing how the matter stood, he answered discreetly, "It is true, Monseigneur, that the Pope selects whom he will to be Cardinals, but he has not as yet taken any from out his stables."[1]

Possibly the King had repented of his choice, even during the short time that de Périgny held the office, for he was a small-minded man, and his petty jealousy soon came across the King, who proposed attaching Huet, afterwards Bishop of Avranches, to his son's suite; but the suggestion was met with such vehement opposition by de Périgny, who looked upon it as depreciating himself, that the Duc de Montausier recommended the King to give up the appointment, advantageous as it might be to the Dauphin, rather than raise the inevitable commotion attending it. On de Périgny's death, the King at once appointed Bossuet to fill his place, and it was Archbishop Péréfixe who took the information of Louis XIV.'s wishes to the Doyenné de Saint Thomas du Louvre, where Bossuet was. De Périgny died on Sept. 1st, and the 21st of that month was already fixed for Bossuet's conse-

[1] *Lettres*, vol. ii. p. 430.

cration as Bishop of Condom. He held strong opinions as to the duties of Bishops, and he was also fully alive to the important and engrossing task which the office of Preceptor to the future King of France ought to be; and his conscience shrank from attempting to combine the two. Accordingly, while acknowledging the compliment paid to him by the King, Bossuet represented that he was but just recently appointed to the charge of a diocese, and therefore he felt unable to undertake any fresh responsibility. To this Louis XIV. replied that he intended to have a Bishop as his son's preceptor, and he added,—"Be consecrated, and then follow the dictates of your conscience; I will leave you entirely free as to your bishopric."

This was all very well for the King to say, but the "Grand Roi" had no dispensing power, and his authority could not satisfy the Bishop-elect's scruples as to what seemed to him a breach of ecclesiastical discipline—scruples, indeed, which were not very common to the mind of Churchmen at that day, who, for the most part, did not hesitate to accept whatever posts of honour or profit came in their way. In his perplexity Bossuet referred the matter to two learned holy priests—Féret, Curé of S. Nicolas du Chardonneret, and de Poussey, Curé of Saint Sulpice. They decided that, everything being arranged for his con-

secration, it should proceed, and that afterwards the question as to his retaining both offices should be settled. Accordingly, on S. Matthew's Day 1670, Bossuet was consecrated at Pontoise, where the Assembly of the Clergy was sitting—the Coadjutor of Rheims, Charles Le Tellier, consecrating, assisted by the Bishops of Autun and Verdun. The ceremony took place in the Church of the Cordeliers, and was attended by the whole Assembly: the Abbé de Fromentières, afterwards Bishop of Aire, preached on the occasion, and the next day Bossuet took the oaths as Bishop of Condom before the King—a form which he repeated the day following as Preceptor to the Dauphin. But Bossuet's mind was not at rest as to holding the two appointments, and he could not reconcile his idea of a Bishop's duty with his necessary attendance at Court; so at the end of a year—October 31, 1671—he resigned the See of Condom, together with all its emoluments, which amounted to 40,000 livres, having so far barely received what would pay the expenses of his patent and consecration. On his first nomination to Condom, Bossuet had resigned all his offices at Metz, and all he possessed now was the Priory of Plessis and the Doyenné of Gassicourt, which together scarcely produced 14,000 livres. That, in doing this, Bossuet was seeking to satisfy his own conscience rather than to gain the world's applause, may be

inferred from Mme. de Sevigné's writing satirically as though he were holding large preferments[1]—a slander which she contradicts a little later, saying, "I did not know that M. de Condom had resigned his Bishopric."[2] But right as he clearly was in surrendering these emoluments, Bossuet was left in a position scarcely fitting for the Dauphin's Preceptor, and Louis XIV., who, whatever his faults, did not lack liberality, or a sense of *les convenances*, offered Bossuet the choice between three abbeys, all vacant in consequence of Cardinal Mancini's death. Bossuet accepted that of Saint Lucien at Beauvais, which was worth 20,000 livres. Writing about this to the Maréchal de Bellefonds, he says: "This abbey which the King gives me extricates me from cares and difficulties which could not go on long with the present call upon my thoughts. Do not be afraid, however, that I am going to increase my expenditure in a worldly fashion. A luxurious table is out of keeping with my office as well as my taste, and my relations shall never make a harvest out of the Church's revenues. I shall pay all my debts as speedily as possible: they chiefly concern necessary outlay in Church matters, such as my *bulles*, vestments, and the like. As to all benefices, assuredly they are intended for those who serve in the Church, and so long as I hold no more than what is requisite

[1] *Lettres*, vol. ii. p. 152. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 162.

for my position, I do not know that I ought to have any scruples. Beyond that I will certainly not go, and, God knows, I have no wish to raise myself. So soon as I shall have finished my work here, I shall be quite ready to retire, and to work wherever God may call me. As to what is necessary thus to fill my position, it is difficult at present to decide that accurately just yet, on account of various unforeseen expenses. As far as I know I am not fond of money, and I daresay I can go without many conveniences. But I do not feel myself able to get all that is necessary, supposing we go no farther than that, and I should lose half my wits if I were straitened in my household affairs. I shall learn by experience what I can do without, and then I shall come to a resolution, in which I most certainly will endeavour not to come before God's Judgment with a doubtful question on my conscience. . . . It was impossible to put matters straight in the way you suggested. I shall try that in the end all I do may be to the edification of the Church. I know I am blamed for certain things, without which, I am daily convinced, I could have done no good. I like regularity, but there are seasons in which it is very difficult to adhere strictly to it. Where the ruling object is to do right, it comes out sooner or later—one cannot do everything at once."[1]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 152.

The Prince to whom Bossuet was about to devote the next ten years of his life was the only legitimate son of Louis XIV. by his Queen, Marie Thérèse of Austria, to whom he was married June 9, 1660. The Dauphin, Louis, was born November 1, 1661, and his godmother and great-aunt, Henrietta Maria, Queen of England, gave him the name of *Toussaint*, in memory of his having been born on All Saints' Day. This prince verified the saying which was popularly applied to him in his youth: "Fils de roi, père de roi, jamais roi."[1] He married a Bavarian princess in 1680, and was the father of the Duke of Burgundy (Fénelon's pupil, and in his turn the father of Louis XV.), as also of Philip of Anjou, King of Spain, and of Charles, Duc de Berri. Monseigneur himself died before Louis XIV., April 14, 1711.[2] The amount of pains and self-devotion with which Bossuet entered upon his task of Preceptor certainly warranted his conviction that its duties were too onerous to be compatible with those involved in ruling a diocese. An unusually clear insight into his views and practices concerning the Prince's education is given us, both through the records of Bossuet's secretary, the Abbé Le Dieu, and through his own letter, "De Institutione Ludovici Delphini,"

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 256.

[2] "Ce 14 Avril 1711, onze heures du soir, mourut à Meudon, de la petite vèrole, Mgr. Louis Dauphin."— LE DIEU, *Journal*, vol. iv. p. 330.

addressed to Pope Innocent IX. in 1679, that Pontiff having requested him to set forth his opinions and thoughts on the subject.[1] The whole work was undertaken in a spirit of religion, as a thing to be done for God's Sake, and as in His Sight, not merely as an honourable and profitable office, likely to promote the worldly interests of the preceptor.

Bossuet fully intended to begin by endeavouring to win the boy's affection and to obtain his confidence; he gave up his whole time and attention to him, and even went so far as to be present every night when he was put to bed, and send him to sleep with stories! Nothing was devolved on others. Although Huet, the *sous-precepteur*, and de Cordemoy, reader, were both able men, Bossuet attended to every lesson himself in the smallest detail, partly on the ground that a child learns more readily where there is no break in style or manner of teaching. As might be expected, the religious education of the Dauphin was of primary importance in Bossuet's eyes,[2] and morning and evening he read a chapter of Holy Scripture with his royal pupil, who was taught to remain uncovered during this instruction out of reverence to God's Word; and if,

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxiii.

[2] Yet Bossuet desired no affectation of external observance in his Prince, and warned him against an exaggerated outward display, which might easily be unreal, and designed to meet men's eyes rather than God's.—See *Politique*, *Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 57.

as would sometimes happen, his attention wandered, and he showed any irreverence or carelessness of manner, Bossuet used to take away the Bible from him, as a reminder of the respect due to God's Word.[1]

The great orator and patristic student now devoted his theological stores to explaining Holy Scripture in simple language to a little child, "plane et simpliciter," he says himself; often pointing out to him that many things in the Word of God were not only beyond his comprehension, but beyond that of the human mind altogether. The Gospels were read over several times before the Old Testament, meanwhile, however, referring to those prophecies and quotations which enable the student of the New Testament better to understand it; and by degrees Bossuet led his pupil to read each part of Holy Scripture by the light of all the rest, whether history or prophecy. Church History, the Lives of the Saints, and the Acts of Martyrs were turned to from time to time, and the Catechism, which Monseigneur learned by heart, was frequently explained and dwelt upon, and the three words, piety, goodness, and justice (PIETAS, BONITAS, JUSTITIA), fixed in his mind as the groundwork of all Christian life and all Royal duties. His personal devotions were not neglected, and the instructions and prayers selected and prepared for the Dauphin's use were subsequently

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxiii. p. 4.

re-arranged and given to the public under the title of "Prières Ecclésiastiques," together with the "Catéchisme de Meaux."[1]

As regarded the secular side of the Prince's education, Bossuet's view was that "one is not to represent to one's self a prince always with a book in his hand, a knitted brow, and eyes downcast. His chief book is the world, his main study attention to what passes before him, in order that he may profit by it."[2] And again he says, "But of all men whom a prince should know, it behoves him to know best — himself."[3] Nevertheless he took great pains to ground the Dauphin well in grammar, without making that necessary branch of study so dry and unattractive as it too generally becomes to children. With this view he taught it very much by word of mouth, after writing careful papers, for he did nothing by halves (and these grammatical notes were found among his papers after his death), trying to make his pupil see the application of the rules he learnt, to interest him in the elements of philology, and to draw his attention to the varieties of expression and elegance of which well-chosen language is capable. The Dauphin was also made to learn select passages in prose and verse both from French and Latin authors, which he was led to repeat

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. v. [2] vol. xxiii. p. 592.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 600.

when they were applicable to the things he heard or talked about. Arithmetic and a certain portion of mathematics and geometrical drawing (the first books of Euclid are mentioned) Bossuet did not attempt to teach himself (as we have seen, he had no taste for the science), but he superintended the lessons of an able master, François Blondel, in this department, and took care, so he says, that his pupil should not be wearied or disgusted by them. Geography he taught the Prince himself, rather as an amusement than as a serious lesson,—going on imaginary journeys and voyages, investigating or exploring countries, visiting (in imagination) all the most notable scenes of the world, and talking over their peculiarities, the events that had happened there, the manners and customs of their inhabitants, and all the endless subjects of interest which may be drawn out in such a manner for the instruction of an intelligent child.

The solidity of Bossuet's classical studies has been already dwelt upon, but so conscientious was he in his desire to be as thorough a preceptor as possible, that he set himself to work anew, and prepared his own mind to teach the rudiments of Latin and Greek by a renewed and deep study of all the Greek Classics. "Poets, orators, historians, philosophers,—all the mighty monuments of Rome and Athens, were once more carefully studied, and Bossuet made himself so

fully master of their genius and their style, that it may be said he is the only author who has been able to impart the purest tone of the ancient classics—so difficult to attain—into the French language."[1] Probably this was no distasteful task, though had it been, it would not therefore have been neglected. But Bossuet's enthusiastic love of Homer has been mentioned before; he always found rest and recreation in that study, and he knew most of the Iliad and Odyssey by heart, going on for almost any length of time pouring out whole passages from these, or from the writings of Virgil and Horace. Years after, when Bishop of Meaux, he was walking in the gardens of Germigny with the Bishop of Autun, and the conversation turning on Homer, Bossuet kindled and went off into a long passage of the Iliad, which he repeated with enthusiasm. His brother Bishop expressed admiration and surprise at Mgr. de Meaux' intimate knowledge of the Greek poet :—

"What is there to wonder at," Bossuet asked, "after spending so many years in teaching grammar and rhetoric?"

"But at what school?" asked the Bishop of Autun, puzzled.

"Why, at Versailles and Saint-Germain!" Bossuet answered, smiling; and he went on to tell—not without some self-complacency—that while educating the

[1] CARDINAL DE BAUSSET, *Vie*, vol. i. p. 303.

Dauphin, his mind was so full of Homer that not unfrequently he spouted him when sleeping, waking himself by the energy of his own declamation; and on one occasion he even framed some Greek verses in his sleep, which he was able to remember when awake.

Bossuet never walked in the country without a Virgil in his pocket, and his familiarity with classical authors generally was so great, that when any discussion on a classical point arose, he was usually able to give an authoritative answer at once. His Classics are nearly as much marked and annotated as we have already said his Bible and Greek Testament were. Numbers of spirited translations, made by Bossuet with his pupil in early days, were found among his papers at his death, in the Prince's handwriting, especially passages from Cicero and Sallust; and while still quite a child, Monseigneur had acquired a considerable and ready knowledge of Latin and Greek. Bossuet disapproved of introducing young students to isolated or detached passages of great writers: as a rule he made the Dauphin read a work entire, so as to accustom him not only to study great authors in detail, but to look at the large aim and end, the *ensemble*, of a book, "believing" (he says in his letter to Pope Innocent) "that detached portions are never properly understood, and that the true beauty of each can only be

perceived by viewing the whole as you would view a building, so as to take in its design and idea."

Bossuet says that his pupil's favourite authors were Virgil and Terence, Sallust and Cæsar, especially the latter. It is easy to understand that a young prince, brought up at a time when war and the glory of military enterprise was so prominent, should have listened with more practical interest to warlike events than any other side of history. "We used to follow the great Captain in all his marches," says Bossuet; "we watched him encamping, preparing his troops for battle, we saw him plan and execute his designs, reward or punish his soldiers, train them, encourage them, control them. We saw how he could lead a powerful army through a country without damaging it; how he kept up discipline among his troops; how he retained his allies by faithfulness and protection; how he adapted his plan of action to the place and the foe he had to encounter; how he could pardon the vanquished and yet put down rebellion; how he would govern the people he conquered so wisely that they acquiesced in his victory."

It would take a big book, Bossuet observes, were he to collect all the notes and extracts made by his royal pupil, under his guidance, from the various authors they read together, especially from Cicero.

But the most considerable labour the Dauphin's preceptor undertook is yet to be mentioned. Rightly

looking upon history as the most important of all secular studies for a king, as "the ruler of life and politics," or as he says in one of his great Orations, "the wisest counsellor of princes, for therein the greatest kings take no rank save through their virtues, and abased for ever by the hands of death, they come singly, without court or train, before the judgment-seat of time and nations:"[1] thus regarding history, he made it the prominent feature in the Dauphin's education. Above all, Bossuet desired to give him a thorough and familiar knowledge of the history of his own country. "He who would judge well concerning the future," Bossuet wrote for his royal pupil's instruction, "must diligently consult the past."[2] And again he says, "Great things to the great. The higher a man's eminence, the greater should be his virtues. A prince should think great thoughts; 'the liberal deviseth liberal things' (Isa. xxxii. 8). Put away vulgar, common ideas, and seek after royal thoughts; and these are such as concern the common welfare: great men are not born for themselves; great powers, on which all stand and gaze, are meant for the good of all mankind."[3] But in order to spare him the weariness of toiling through irrelevant matter, lest he should learn to dislike the study, his preceptor spared the

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 479. [2] Vol. xxiii. p. 625.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 646.

prince the labour of turning over original documents, always excepting such interesting chroniclers as de Commines and du Bellay, and himself compiled and prepared all his historical lessons, teaching them *viva voce* while the boy was quite young, making him repeat the facts, then write them in French in his own words, and then put them into Latin as a theme, carefully correcting all these exercises. Every Saturday the week's lessons were reviewed, and the Dauphin read aloud what he had written. In this way the Prince acquired a thorough knowledge of the groundwork of French history, and his notes may be found among the works of Bossuet under the title of "Abrégé de l'Histoire de France."[1] This History scarcely deserves such a position, since, though doubtless the result of Bossuet's painstaking labours,[2] and written under his

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxv.

[2] An enormous quantity of notes, extracts, and abridgments prepared for these lessons remain, as well as chronological and geographical tables and charts—numbers of these from Theophylact, Procopius, Nicetas, Comnenus, Cantacuzenus, Monstrelet, Belleforêt, Godefroi, Saint-Gelais, de Commines, de Villars, Guicciardini, Davila, de Thou, etc. etc.—are in Bossuet's own writing, while other works he committed to trustworthy deputies, always, however, himself giving them the plan on which they were to work, and revising the results; applying the rules of true and deep criticism to each topic with a thoroughness not often met with. The Bibliothèque du Roi was laid under contribution for his son's education, and papers are still extant giving summaries and notices of *Mémoires* there found, sent in by the *Garde des Manuscrits* at Bossuet's request.

guidance, it is really the young Prince's composition, and not worthy of Bossuet as an author. The original manuscripts (which Cardinal de Bausset had examined) are in the Dauphin's handwriting, corrected and added to in that of Bossuet, but this is all. This History ends with the Life of Charles IX., and it is noteworthy that in the manuscript the account of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Eve is in Bossuet's writing, and that a zealous Huguenot could scarcely speak with more emphatic abhorrence, or with less mind to justify in any degree that atrocious wickedness.[1] The last paragraph of the book, and its sententious little moral, savour of the young Prince's composition, rather than that of his gifted tutor.

Nor did Bossuet's literary labours for his pupil stop here. To quote his own words as to the training in philosophy he aimed at imparting :—"With respect to philosophical matters, I so arranged them as to set before him seriously, and in all the absoluteness of their principles, such as are unquestionable and useful in daily life. As to those questions which are open to varying opinion and disputation, I was content to set them before him as a matter of history, judging that it was suitable for him to hear both sides impartially, without entering into their disputes; and that because one who is born to rule must needs learn to judge, but not to

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxv. pp. 620-627.

dispute. But believing that real philosophy consists chiefly in recalling the mind within itself, in order thence to raise it firmly to God, we began therewith, as at once the easiest, and also the most solid and useful which can be set before a student. For herein a man need only study himself in order to become a perfect philosopher, and without laboriously consulting many books, or toiling over the utterances of bygone philosophers, or hunting up experiences from afar: he needs but to observe what he finds within himself in order to recognise the Author of his being. Therefore, during his earliest years, I sowed the seeds of this most useful and beautiful philosophy, using every means to teach the prince to distinguish between body and mind—*i.e.*, between that which rules and that which obeys—so that in the soul ruling the body he may see represented God ruling the whole world and the soul itself. Then, as he grew older, I thought it well to teach him a more systematic philosophy, the plan of which I took from the Gospel, 'Take heed to yourselves'[1] (Luke xxi. 34), and from King David, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain to it.'[2] Resting, therefore, on these two foundations, I wrote a Treatise 'On the Knowledge

[1] *Attendite vobis.*

[2] In the Vulgate, which Bossuet quotes, "Mirabilis facta est scientia tua ex me."—PSAL. xxxviii. 6; English version, xxxix. 5.

of God and of Self,'[1] wherein I set forth the structure of the body and the nature of the mind, by means of details which every one has experienced in himself, showing how a man who knows how to see himself clearly will see God more really present than aught else, since without Him man has neither life nor breath nor being—according to that great treatise on Philosophy which the Apostle set forth at Athens, the very theme of all philosophy, saying of the Lord, 'He is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being. He giveth to all life and breath and all things' (Acts xvii. 25-28). Following S. Paul's example, who uses this truth as familiar to all philosophers, in order to lead them onwards, I have undertaken to kindle this idea of the Divinity, which nature has placed within our souls when created, from the sole contemplation of ourselves; so that it may be seen clearly that those who will not perceive wherein they are superior to the mere beasts are at once the blindest, most wicked, and indolent of men."[2]

This Treatise, written for the immediate instruction of one young prince, has become of world-wide fame among philosophers. Père Gratry, in his own great

[1] *Traité de la Connaissance de Dieu et de Soi-même, Œuvres*, vol. xxiii. p. 33.

[2] *De Instit., Œuvres*, vol. xxiii. p. 9.

work, "La Connaissance de Dieu," speaks of it as "a book truly vast in its results and its depth."[1] Those who wish to study a masterly analysis of the great Orator's philosophy, as contained in this Treatise and elsewhere, will find it under the Article "Bossuet" in that book, where the striking manner by which he draws out the dependence of every faculty of the soul on God is ably summed up—the "hidden spring" which, while leaving hold on the material, is linked by a secret point to a Higher Principle. "Ce ressort caché dont parle Bossuet," says Père Gratry, "est une intuition du genie. Qui ne connait pas ce ressort caché ne comprend rien à l'âme humaine. L'âme de l'homme tient à la matière, qui est au-dessous d'elle, et la touche, c'est evident: mais elle n'y tient pas tout entière, et elle touche autre chose que le matière, elle touche Dieu, qui est plus haut qu'elle . . . et cette attache nécessaire à Dieu donne à l'âme une vertue secrète, et un ressort caché, par lequel elle peut s'élancer plus haut qu'elle, vers l'éternel et l'infini, pour le concevoir."[2]

It is marvellous to think of the energy and activity of mind which could thus lavish on one child such

[1] "L'œuvre de Bossuet, œuvre véritablement immense par ses résultats et par sa profondeur, est une œuvre d'application de la Philosophie à la Théologie, et réciproquement."—vol. ii. p. 47.

[2] *De la Connaissance de Dieu*, vol. ii. p. 68.

intellectual stores; for though now Bossuet's "Traité" is known to all students of philosophy, and valued as one of his most able works, it was not published till after his death in 1722, when, having been first found among Fénelon's papers, it was supposed to be his. The fact was, Bossuet had lent it to him when he was superintending the education of the Duc de Bourgogne, reckoning it as a thing of no public value. Bossuet's original manuscript was discovered in 1741, by dint of pressure put upon that nephew, the Bishop of Troyes, who proved himself so unworthy a guardian of his great relative's papers, and was re-edited.

Another work Bossuet composed for the Dauphin's benefit was a treatise on Logic,[1] which he says he took from Plato and Aristotle, not with a view to train his pupil in mere verbal subtleties, but to form his judgment by solid reasoning. This was followed by a "Traité du libre Arbitre,"[2] and by a work called "Histoire Universelle," which has enjoyed a great reputation ever since it was given to the world in 1781. Nicole says that there is so much talent, soundness of judgment, dignity, and enlightenment in it, as to make it one of the most useful books ever written;[3] and Voltaire says that Bossuet "invented a new kind of eloquence which could hardly have succeeded in any

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxiii. p. 249.
[2] *Lettres*, vol. xii. Lett. 89.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. xxiii. p. 426.

other hands! He applied the art of oratory to history, which would appear to discard it. His 'Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle' had no model, and has had no imitators. His style has found nothing save admiration. Men were amazed at the majestic vigour with which he depicts the government and manners, the rise and fall of mighty empires, and at the vigorous, energetic, and truthful touches with which he draws and discusses nations."[1]

It appears from Bossuet's Letter to Pope Innocent XI. that he had written the chief part of this history during the earlier stages of the Dauphin's education, and had read it with him, but later on the author carefully reviewed it, adding to and improving it.[2] His original plan and intentions are set forth in the dedication to the Dauphin. "Even were history useless to other men," he says, "it behoves princes to read it.

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 108.

[2] Sainte Beuve says of the Histoire Universelle: "Ce fameux Discours . . . s'adressait, dans la pensée du grand Évêque, bien plus à la posterité qu'à son indolent et inattentif élève. On peut dire que Bossuet médita de tout temps cet ouvrage, pour lequel il amassait bien des réflexions et des pensées dès les années de son séjour à Metz, lorsqu'il avait sous les yeux le spectacle des Juifs nombreux de ce pays, et qu'il conférait avec les plus savants de leur rabbins."—*Nouveaux Lundis*, vol. ix. p. 282. Saint Beuve half complains of the dryness of the early part of this work, half admires its unity and complete absence of superfluous words: "On essayerait vainement de détacher quelques passages, et c'est peut-être un éloge."—p. 286.

There is no better way for them to discover how much depends on passion and interest, on the right use of time and opportunity, on good or bad counsels. . . . When princes behold even the most hidden vices of their fellows exposed to the gaze of all men, notwithstanding the false flattery they received during their lives, they may well be ashamed of the idle delight they take in the praise of man, and realise that true glory can only follow merit. Moreover, it is a shame, I do not say for a prince, but for any educated man, to be ignorant about the human race, and the memorable changes that time has made in the world."[1] Bossuet goes on to explain the epochs into which he divides his Universal History, which are twelve—beginning with Adam and ending with Charlemagne. He had intended to write a second part, continuing from Charlemagne up to Louis XIV., but this he never did. The arrangement and condensation of facts is masterly: perhaps to modern readers this may be a more obvious merit than the eloquence which Voltaire praises in the book. Anyhow, the whole serves to bring out forcibly what may be looked upon as the key-note of the history: "In a word, there is no earthly power which does not promote other aims besides its own, whether it will or no. God Alone knows how to subject all things to His Will."[2]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxiv. p. 260. [2] *Ibid*, p. 655.

A work called "Politique Sacrée" was written towards the end of Bossuet's preceptorship, when the Dauphin, then in his seventeenth year, required, as Bossuet thought, "more instruction than he had yet had in the principles, rules, and duties of policy." This work is, as it professes to be, almost literally in the words of Holy Scripture, from which every proposition and illustration is taken. The amount of Holy Writ quoted, and the thorough knowledge and application of it, are very remarkable; and Bossuet starts by telling his royal pupil that "God is the King of kings, and to Him it appertains to guide and teach them as His ministers," —hence His Word is their surest and most infallible rule. The book is written in the form of propositions, which establish such points as—"All men have the like end and object, which is God;" "Each man is bound to care for his fellow-man;" and the like. The whole tone, putting forward strongly, as it does, the Divine Right of Kings, bears a tone and a stamp rejected in France not long after, and, as it would seem, for ever. Nevertheless there are passages which it is curious to find from the pen of so absolute a royalist, and which might have satisfied some of his republican successors. Such as—

"The Son of God did not merely fulfil the ordinary duties, etc., . . . but He was likewise a good citizen. . . . He was recognised *pour bon citoyen*, and it was

used as a recommendation to Him that a certain man 'loved the nation.'"[1]

Probably a few years later there were many in France who, without agreeing in Bossuet's absolutist principles, would have been ready cordially to agree with his proposition that "that government is the best which is the furthest removed from anarchy."[2] Possibly, too, had all Bossuet's principles been lived out by kings and people, the bitter days of Revolution would never have come. But neither princes or nobles, alas! acted up to the precept: "Be not proud: be familiar and accessible; do not imagine yourself of a different metal to that of which your subjects are made. Put yourself in their place, and be to them what you would wish were they in yours. . . . The prince is a public personage who ought to feel that something is wanting to himself when anything is wanting to his people and the State."[3] There are many pithy truths, too, in these pages, such as—"The very sight of the monarch has a charm for his people, and nothing is easier for him than to win a passionate love for his person."[4] There is a chapter on the self-restraint which monarchs should practise, which must have required some vigour for a servant of Louis XIV. to write; but Bossuet never forgot that

[1] *Politique*, vol. xxiii. p. 509.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 526.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 542.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 555.

he was still more God's servant than the King's. "'Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thine appetites. If thou givest thy soul the desires that please her, she will make thee a laughing-stock to thine enemies' (Ecclus. xviii. 30, 31). Therefore resist your own will, and above all be firm against yourself. The first of all empires is that which a man maintains over his passions—that is the source and root of all authority. He who has an empire over himself is fit to have it over others, but he who is not master of his own passions, has no strength in him —he is weak from the very foundation."[1]

Such were the really vast labours Bossuet undertook in order to satisfy his sensitive conscience towards his pupil, on whom he never ceased to inculcate his own grand view of royal dignity: "Je n'appelle pas majesté cette pompe qui environne les Rois, ou cet éclat extérieur qui éblouit le vulgaire. C'est le rejaillissement de la majesté, et non pas la majesté elle-même."[2]

Pity it seems that so much care and energy and self-devotion should not have had more fruit. Monseigneur by no means answered to the efforts made by his preceptor. Bossuet himself writes from Versailles to the Maréchal de Bellefonds, July 6, 1677,—"I am nearly at the end of my labours. Monseigneur is so big, he cannot be much longer under our rule. There

[1] *Politique*, *Œuvres*, vol. xxiii. p. 576. [2] *Ibid.* p. 643.

is much to endure with so very inattentive a mind; there is no visible encouragement;—one has to go on, as S. Paul says, hoping against hope. He makes fairly good beginnings, but there is so little that is stable about him, that the least thing in the world may overthrow all one has done. I would fain see a more solid foundation, but it may be that God will do what we cannot."[1]

That Bossuet strove earnestly to correct this fault of inattention may be further judged from the lessons on attention given in the "Connaissance de Dieu et de Soi-même," where he speaks strongly of its necessity, and of the way to cultivate it by conquering dissipation of mind and wandering thoughts.[2] The need of a strong will, not led by passion, is also dwelt upon;[3] and in the "Politique" he returns to the subject: "You may have truth before your eyes, but if you do not open them you will not see. And the soul opens its eyes through attention. . . . Be attentive and thoughtful in all things. . . . It is attention everywhere that is our safeguard. . . . The inattentive man must fall into one of two faults;—he will wander wildly, or he will be in a lethargy as one that dreams. The first of these faults produces heedless men, the second stupid ones."[4]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 203.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. xxiii. p. 156.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 162.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 611.

The Dauphin is generally spoken of in contemporary *Mémoires* as excessively indolent and careless, and obstinate, subservient to his father to excess,[1] and there is no doubt that his morals were as loose as unhappily were those of most of his royal relatives.[2] He was very fat and apparently self-indulgent, and Louis XIV. used to say that he had "la bonne mine d'un prince allemand." He was, as Sainte Beuve says, wholly material, a mere dense indolent mass of flesh.[3] Bossuet's duties with respect to this prince came to an end late in 1679, when the Dauphin was just eighteen, and he was shortly after married to the Bavarian Princess Marie Anne Christine.[4] Mme. de Sevigné, mentioning Bossuet and Mme. de Maintenon among those who were sent to meet the young Dauphiness at Schlestadt, says, "If Madame la Dauphine believes

[1] Gault de Saint-Germain.

[2] MME. DE SEVIGNÉ, *Lettres*, vol. viii. p. 188.

[3] *N. Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 115.

[4] There is some discrepancy in the dates assigned to this marriage, which Cardinal de Bausset speaks of as taking place in March 1681. Voltaire fixes it on March 8, 1680 (*Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 256); but Mme. de Sevigné, writing on January 24, 1680, says, "Ils seront mariés demain à Munich" (by proxy); "on envoie d'ici des habits magnifiques, que l'electeur avoit demandé pour lui et pour sa sœur," vol. vi. p. 320. On the 2nd February she writes, "Il y à huit jours qu'elles (les dames de la Dauphine) sont partis avec toute la maison pour Schlestadt," p. 346, and there seems no reason to question the accuracy of Voltaire's date.

that all Frenchmen and Frenchwomen are as clever as these two specimens she will be disappointed!"[1] Bossuet was appointed Premier Aumonier to the bride, and in that capacity was the first to take the oath of allegiance. The Duc de Montausier also resigned his post as Governor at the Dauphin's marriage, and Mme. de Sevigné reports him as having said, when taking leave, "Monseigneur, si vous êtes honnête homme, vous m'aimerez, si vous ne l'êtes pas, vous me hairez, et je m'en consolerai."[2]

The Bavarian Princess is represented by Mme. de Maintenon as attractive; her figure, arms, and hands, beautiful; and she also says that, notwithstanding a great desire to please, she showed both wit and dignity. At Strasbourg the magistrates received her with a German speech, on which the Princess said, "Messieurs, speak French—I have ceased to understand German." Mme. de Sevigné says that she wrote to the Dauphin, "avec des nuances de style, selon qu'elle à été près d'être sa femme, qui ont marqué bien de l'esprit."[3] The same gossip-loving lady, to whom we are indebted for so many life-like pictures of her time, says that on the Princess's arrival, Monseigneur "behaved very well, though he forgot at first to kiss her when saluting her. I think," she goes on to say, "that this princess will bring us a great deal of devotion, but all the same she

[1] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 362. [2] *Ibid.* p. 372. [3] *Ibid.* p. 384.

will have to give up the Angelus; do you suppose she will ever hear that at Saint-Germain? It was all very well for Munich! She wanted to go to confession on the eve of the final marriage ceremony, but there was no Jesuit to be found who understood German,—a Canon of Liège was accidentally found, who tried to evade the honour, saying that he had never confessed any one but a soldier wounded in the trenches. However he did as best he could, and so did the Princess. All this will soon be arranged, for the Princess is no way behind the Queen in the matter of frequent Communion. Her soul will not be in the Père Bourdaloue's charge."[1]

The general impression made by the Dauphiness at Court seems to have been favourable, though the Parisian mind was disposed to sneer at Munich ways as "provincial," and to those ways the Dauphiness was wedded. "She has no beauty, but her ugliness is not striking or disagreeable; her face is unsuitable, but her *esprit* is most suitable to her position; everything she says or does shows how clever she is. She has bright penetrating eyes, takes in and perceives everything quickly; she is very natural, and no more embarrassed or awe-struck than if she had been born in the Louvre. She shows great gratitude to the King, but without lowering herself at all. She does not

[1] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 398.

seem to think of herself as having been in an inferior position to that which she now fills, but as having been chosen out of all Europe to occupy this. Her manner is noble, full of dignity and kindness; she is fond of poetry, of music, of conversation; she does not mind being alone for four or five hours, and is amazed at the trouble we take here to amuse ourselves. She shuts her door against slander and gossip: the other day, the Duchesse de la Ferté was going to tell her as a secret, some joke about the poor Princesse Marianne,[1] whose troubles might be respected; but Madame la Dauphine said, with a very serious tone, '*Madame, je ne suis point curieuse.*'"[2] "No Princess born in the Louvre could acquit herself better. . . . She is very obliging, but with dignity and without any silliness. All her opinions are Munich-made, and she does not adopt any others. She is asked to play: 'I do not like gambling.' She is asked to go out hunting: 'I never liked *la chasse*.' What do you like then? 'I like conversation, I like to be at peace in my own room, I like to work.' What she does like very much indeed, is to please the King. This wish is worthy of her right mind, and she succeeds so well in the undertaking, that the King bestows a great deal

[1] The Princesse de Conti, a natural daughter of Louis XIV. by Louise de la Vallière, and married to the Prince de Conti, January 1680.

[2] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 419.

of his time upon her, at the cost of his '*anciennes amies*,' who put up but impatiently with the privation."[1] "Madame de Coulanges is charmed with the Dauphiness, and she has good reason to be. . . . She went to a *cabinet* where Madame la Dauphine retires in the afternoon with her ladies, and there she chatted delightfully. Nobody could have more intelligence or *esprit* than this Princess; she makes herself quite adored by all the Court."[2]

Such a woman seems to have been the wife Bossuet might have wished for his pupil, and might have hoped to see retain his affections, but unhappily it was not so. Even in May 1680 Madame de Sevigné says that the Dauphiness seemed "triste;"[3] and if she was the kind of woman to be inferred from the above descriptions of her, the Princess was not likely to find the Court a congenial element, in spite of the King's attachment to her, which was constant; and the various scandals which surrounded her, which would have tried most people sorely,[4] must have been sickening to any right-minded person. The Dauphiness also extremely desired a child—naturally enough, as heir-apparent to the Crown of France, and also she perhaps hoped thereby to secure her husband's affection. The desired heir came at length, August 6, 1682, and the

[1] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 434.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 440.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 462.
[4] *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 92.

much-desired Duc de Bourgogne was received with enthusiastic joy. Louis XIV., usually grave and majestic, was overwhelmed with delight, and thought no public rejoicings sufficient for the occasion. But the Dauphin was inconstant, and it was said that the Dauphiness's strong German proclivities estranged even the King from her.[1] This Princess had two other sons, and died, after giving birth to the last, April 20, 1690. "Enfin voilà cette pauvre Dauphine morte bien tristement, bien saintement," Madame de Sevigné wrote on the 26th April. Bossuet was in attendance at the last, as well as Louis XIV. and the Dauphin. As the end drew near, Bossuet suggested that the King had better retire. "No, no," Louis replied, "it is well that I should see how those like to myself die."[2] The Dauphiness begged the King's pardon for her want of complaisance, and strove to kiss his hand: he embraced her sobbing. She gave a last blessing to her children, including the little son just born, but adding, "Quoique, mon petit Berri, vous soyez cause de ma mort." Madame de Sevigné, writing of this event, wonders who will be asked to preach the funeral oration, adding after, in a very worldly mind, that it seems to her the Dauphiness had three virtues to be

[1] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. vii. p. 487.

[2] *Ibid*, vol. x. p. 288. Gault Saint-Germain. "Non, non, il est bon que je vois comment meurent mes pareils."

commended,—the three Princes she had borne, the Dukes of Bourgogne, Anjou, and Berri,—and that no more was needed. There is no allusion to Bossuet's being requested to preach on this occasion, and the oration was delivered by the Bishop of Nismes.

As early as the 1st of May following, Madame de Maintenon wrote to the Duc de Richelieu that there was talk of a second marriage for the Dauphin; but whatever such ideas may have been entertained, they were not carried out. Probably neither he nor the King remained long inconsolable. What Bussy de Rabutin wrote at the time is over-true: "The King," he says, "wept much for the Dauphiness at first, but if I wished to be permanently regretted by some one, I would not have that 'some one' with all the affairs of Europe on his hands! The living soon cause the dead to be forgotten."[1]

The Dauphin had already, in 1688, been sent into Germany, at the head of the army, as his father's Lieutenant-General, the King addressing him publicly on his departure in these words: "My son, in sending you to command my armies, I give you the opportunity of making your real merit to be known. Go, and set it forth before all Europe, so that when I die, there may be no cause to know that the King is

[1] *Lettres*, vol. x. p. 293.

dead."[1] The Dauphin made himself liked in the army, and the King was proud, says Voltaire, to have a son who imitated him without effacing him, and who made himself beloved by the people, without giving his father cause to fear him. During the siege of Philisbourg (which, however, was practically conducted by the famous engineer Vauban) the Dauphin won great laurels, and the troops gave him the name of Louis le Hardi;[2] and after his wife's death, he continued his military and political life, being admitted into the Council of State in 1691.

We cannot here enter into the wide field of European politics at this period. The glory of France was on the vane; even her victories were unprofitable; her people were perishing miserably amid rejoicings and Te Deums. It is noteworthy that Louis XIV. was fighting against his brother-in-law, the King of Spain, against the Elector of Bavaria, father to his daughter-in-law, and against the Elector Palatine, whose daughter his brother had married.[3] The young Duke of Burgundy was married to a daughter of the King of Savoy. From this time we hear much of the Dauphin's sons, and but little of himself. In 1708, after the siege of Lille, the allies pressed on from Courtrai,

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 217.
[2] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. vii. p. 394.
[3] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 236.

and seized the King's *premier Écuyer*, imagining their prisoner to be the Dauphin. The horizon grew daily darker; famine and war alike pressed heavily on the people; and in a Council held during the winter of 1709, at which both the Dauphin and his son, the young Duc de Bourgogne, were present, the Duc de Beauvilliers drew so touching a description of the condition of their country, that the King's grandson burst into tears, and the Council wept with him.[1] We must not pause to recapitulate Marlborough's victories, or the struggles and intrigues which ended in placing the Dauphin's second son, Charles Duke of Anjou, on the throne of Spain, when Louis XIV. uttered his celebrated bon-mot, "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées."[2] On April 14, 1711, the Dauphin died, seemingly little noticed or cared for; and not a year after, February, 1712, the Duc de Bourgogne (who had become Dauphin on his father's death) died, as well as his young wife and eldest child, of a malignant measles which was at that time devastating Paris. It was their second son, born February 15, 1710, who became Louis XV. As before on the occasion of the Duchess of Orléans' death, a cry of poison was raised, and the actual Duke of Orléans was suspected by some of being the cause of his royal relative's death,—without any foundation, it would appear.

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 339. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 32.

We have thus glanced onwards over the life of Bossuet's pupil, the Dauphin Louis, because it does not again come into contact with that of Bossuet himself. Although connected with the Prince's household (as Aumônier to the Dauphiness), there never seems to have been any intimacy existing between them; not a trace of a letter on either side was found among Bossuet's papers,[1] and there are only three occasions recorded on which the Dauphin visited his former preceptor,—twice in 1688, on his way to and from the army in Germany, and again in 1690, when he arrived on a fine May morning at Germigny, accompanied by the Duc de Vendôme and a numerous suite, and slept one night under Bossuet's roof. The contrast between this and the warm, hearty, and devoted friendship which was kept up between Fénelon and the Duke of Burgundy, who to the last continued "the disciple, the friend, and the child of his preceptor,"[2] is striking. Probably a good deal of the difference arose from the characters of the two men, which must have been very widely different, as were their positions in France; for the young Duke of Burgundy was a much more important, influential person than his father, who had neither any power or wish to influence public events, and it may be that, as Cardinal de Bausset says, if he had been inclined to consult

[1] CARDINAL DE BAUSSET, *Vie*, vol. i. p. 429. [2] *Ibid.*

Bossuet, he would have had nothing about which to ask advice! But though this might be so as regards politics and statesmanship, it could hardly apply to his private life, in which the Bishop who had taught him, and sat by his bed to put him to sleep with stories, might have been expected to have a strong hold over the affections of the Prince, whose high position removed him from the home tendernesses other children receive. Most likely the blame is not all to be attributed to the Dauphin. The Duc de Montausier was a dry, hard man at best,[1] and one gathers that the stupid, heavy Dauphin was coerced and taught and drilled, till, as a clever modern writer has said, he was simply disgusted, for the rest of his life, with anything like intellectual effort or intelligent thought. That Bossuet intended and sought to be all that was kind and indulgent to his pupil, as far as was consistent with the duty he was too conscientious to neglect, we cannot doubt; but it is unquestionable that he did not possess the marvellously loving and loveable nature which makes one feel to this day as though Fénelon were a personal friend, a kindly spiritual Father, ready to listen and help each soul that turns to him. The graver, more dignified, and possibly more learned

[1] "Montausier, qui sous ses vertus de Caton et sous le manteau de duc et pair, avait un arrière-fond de pédant, et une dureté de cuistre."—*N. Lundis*, vol. ii. p. 115.

Bishop of Meaux, had not the same power of winning hearts as the gentle Archbishop of Cambrai; he was more fitting society for critical scholars and theologians than for a dull prince; and while regretting that the Dauphin's colder nature shows to so much less advantage in this respect than that of his son, it is but fair not to lay on him the whole blame of the indifference—for it does not seem to have been a positive estrangement—which existed between himself and the preceptor, whose name is so far more conspicuous in his country's history than his own. Perhaps Fénelon would have won a brighter response even from the Dauphin's "inert mass of mindless matter."

## CHAPTER V.

### BOSSUET A BISHOP.

BOSSUET ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE—DISCOURS—HIS HABITS OF LIFE—SOCIETY—ALLÉE DES PHILOSOPHES—GATHERINGS OF LITERARY MEN—LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE—HER PENITENCE—CONSULTS MARÉCHAL DE BELLEFONDS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH BOSSUET—SHE LEAVES THE COURT—MADEMOISELLE DE BLOIS—THE DUCHESS JOINS THE CARMELITES AND TAKES THE HABIT—TAKES THE VEIL—BOSSUET PREACHER ON THE OCCASION—HER AFTER LIFE AND DEATH—MADAME DE MONTESPAN—THE CURÉ OF VERSAILLES REFUSES HER COMMUNION—LOUIS XIV. CONSULTS BOSSUET—HE TRIES TO SEPARATE THE KING FROM HER—LETTERS TO LOUIS XIV.—THE KING RELAPSES—BOSSUET'S LAST EFFORTS—MADEMOISELLE DE FONTANGES—CONVERSION OF MADEMOISELLE DE DURAS—THE MINISTER CLAUDE—DEATH OF THE DUC DE ROCHEFOUCAULD—BOSSUET'S CORRESPONDENCE.

BUT while Bossuet was carrying on the Dauphin's education, as his first work and engrossing duty, it must not be supposed that this was all which occupied him. His influence was reaching far and wide throughout the literary and Church world. The Académie Française, that intellectual throne which all literary Frenchmen coveted beyond all else, desired to make her boast of embracing Bossuet. On

the death of Archbishop Péréfixe the Académie would gladly thus have filled his place, but it behoved them to elect his successor, Mgr. de Harlay; and it was only the seasonable death of an obscure member, the Abbé Duchâtelet,[1] which enabled the Académie to offer Bossuet a seat—a proceeding which was carried on with such urgency that, in his *Discours de reception*, Bossuet alludes to it half plaintively though gracefully, as leaving him less than sufficient time to prepare his formal address.[2] It was June 8, 1671, that Bossuet made his *Discours*. At that time it was not an invariable custom, as it has since become, for the new Academician to make his discourse chiefly a panegyric on his predecessor, not even to make any allusion to that individual; and accordingly Bossuet does not so much as mention Duchâtelet's name. Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIV., and the Dauphin are eulogised, but neither the *Discours* itself, or the reply to it made by the Director, M. Charpentier, are specially remark-

[1] "Immortel qui est mort tout entier," says the Editor of the Discours.

[2] "C'est qu'ayant abrégé en ma faveur vos formes et vos délais ordinaires, vous me pressez d'autant plus à vous temoigner ma reconnaissance, que vous vous êtes vous-mêmes pressés de me faire sentir les effets de vos bontés particulières; si bien que m'ayant ôté par la grandeur de vos graces le moyen d'en parler dignement, la facilité de les accorder me prive encore du secours que je pouvais espérer de la méditation et du temps."—*Discours*, *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 700.

able. Bossuet was faithful to his duties as an Academician (they are not very burdensome) all his life, and never failed duly to attend its meetings or more private conferences.

As might be expected, the Dauphin's tutor—who was also a well-known author, an Academician, and the most celebrated orator of his day—was greatly sought after by the world in which he lived without mingling. Emphatically so; for while attentive to all that was required of him by etiquette, or *les bien séances*, Bossuet refused to enter into the polished but frivolous society which surrounded him, and studiously confined his relations with the great world to the claims of necessity or duty.[1] As was the case through all his life, so at Court, Bossuet's manner of life was simple, not to say frugal: his table admitted neither

[1] Chateaubriand asks how it was possible that the Bishop of Meaux, perpetually surrounded, as he was, with the pomps and vanities of Versailles, could have attained the depths of spirituality and meditation which poured forth in his sermons and writings? He answers: "C'est qu'il a trouvé dans la religion toute une solitude; c'est que son corps etoit dans le monde, et son esprit au desert; c'est qu'il avoit mis son cœur à l'abri dans les tabernacles secrets du Seigneur; c'est, comme il l'à dit lui-même de Marie Thérèse d'Autriche, qu'on le voyait courir aux autels pour y goûter avec David un humble repos, et s'enfoncer dans son oratoire, où malgré le tumulte de la Cour, il trouvoit le Carmel d'Elie, le désert de Jean, et la montagne si souvent témoin des gémissements de Jésus."—*Génie du Christianisme*, vol. ii. l. iv. p. 307.

of luxury or profusion, his apartments were furnished with modesty, and his household and equipage did not exceed what was necessary. He indulged in no show, in no fashionable amusements, and perhaps the best compliment that could be paid to him, being who and what he was, in those times, was that "he might be taken for any ordinary ecclesiastic."[1]

But he could not help holding a literary court of his own, and accordingly almost every man of any note was eager to gather round Bossuet in the afternoons when he received people; and, weather permitting, he and his following used daily to walk up and down the beautiful gardens and "pleached alleys" of Versailles, Fontainebleau, or Saint-Germain, according to where the Court might be for the time. To the end of his life, even in the last summer—that of 1703—Bossuet was to be seen, accompanied by a cortége comprising all the élite of the clergy and philosophers of his day; and though the leader's hair grew white and his figure stooped, as years passed on from the early time of which we are speaking, his "natural force did not abate" nor the power and grasp of his thoughts and words lose their fascination for those permitted to share in them.[2]

[1] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 2.

[2] "La seul usage qu'il fit de son ascendant et de son autorité, fut de réunir autour de lui des hommes qui pouvoient l'aider dans

Among these were Fénelon, who was presented at this time to Bossuet by his uncle the Marquis de Fénelon, and who in his turn introduced the Abbé de Langeron (son of that Mme. de Langeron who Mme. de Sevigné calls "l'âme de toute la parure de l'Hotel de Condé").[1] Pélisson, who, though not in Holy Orders, was an able and eloquent man, craved admittance into the group, and found it. He was a convert

la récherche et la propagation de la science biblique; l'Abbé de la Broue, depuis Évêque de Mirepoix; l'Abbé de Saint-Luc, aumônier du Roi; l'Abbé Rénaudot, savant Orientaliste; Cordemoy, auteur d'une Histoire de France; Nicolas Thoynard, connu par son Harmonie des quatre Évangiles; puis Fénelon, Fleury, Pélisson, La Bruyère. Au sortir de la leçon qu'il donnoit à M. le Dauphin, il trouvait souvent dans son cabinet cette troupe d'élite qui l'attendoit pour étudier l'écriture sainte; souvent aussi il alloit, entouré de ce cortége, se promener au parc de Versailles, dans l'Allée des Philosophes, sous ces arbres témoins de tant de grandeur et qui devoient l'être de tant d'abaissement. Dans ces promenades qui rappeloient les entretiens du philosophe grec, ou dans son cabinet qui faisoit songer à l'école d'Alcuin dans le palais de Charlemagne, Bossuet, la Bible à la main, proposoit l'interprétation d'un texte sacré, l'explication d'un hébraïsme, la solution d'une difficulté quelconque; chacun apportoit librement son contingent à la science, l'un en philologie, l'autre en herméneutique, l'autre en histoire; le Père qui présidoit le Conseil comme on s'exprimoit à la Cour, animoit les efforts par les charmes de la déférence, et 'si la supériorité de son genie ne l'avoit pas fait reconnaître, sa modestie l'eût fait oublier.' L'Abbé de Fleury rédigeoit les notes, arrêtées d'un commun accord, à côté des textes, sur les marges de la Bible de Vitry."—*Remarques Historiques.*

[1] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 310.

from Calvinism, and no one in the company better appreciated Bossuet's learning. The Allées of the *Petit Parc* at Versailles, especially one called henceforth the Allée des Philosophes, was the favourite scene of these gatherings, in which, though conversation was perfectly free and unshackled, often turning upon the literary novelties of the day, or on poetry and art—when Bossuet would be carried away by his enthusiasm, and draw forth from that unfailing memory stores of ready and happy quotations; yet graver subjects often prevailed. Discussions upon matters the deepest of religion and philosophy would arise—questions concerning difficult passages in Holy Scripture, or dogmas, were raised; and sometimes Bossuet would read or have read parts of his own writings, and take the suggestions and opinions of his friends for their correction or improvement. The *Politique Sacrée* was read and revised in this way—so the Abbé Le Dieu tells us—during Bossuet's last residence at Versailles, in 1703. Almost from his first residence at Court, Saint-Germain had been the King's winter abode, as was Versailles in the summer; and as there was no afternoon service on Sundays in the Chapel Royal, Bossuet proposed to his group of familiars that, instead of it, they should devote the usual walk to the study of Holy Scripture, and the suggestion being first made in Advent, they resolved

to begin with the Prophet Isaiah. A large Bible, with ample margin for notes, was kept specially for the purpose, and at the end of each walk it was the Abbé Fleury's business to enter into this Bible the results of the day.[1] There, amid the gay and splendid Court, trifling away their time in idle and often far worse ways, Bossuet might be seen, Sunday after Sunday, Bible in hand, while Fleury—who always carried writing materials on purpose—took down his comments. This Sunday habit continued up to the year 1685, and to make sure of not losing their time through unpunctuality, Bossuet used to invite his co-operators in the work to dine with him before their work. The Abbé de Longuerue says, moreover, that the fare supplied to the body at Bossuet's table was by no means so good as the mental fare which was to follow!

Eventually many of the notes and dissertations thus gathered were published. In 1691 Bossuet published the "Dissertatio de Psalmis," to which were joined the Canticles or Hymns of Praise found in Exodus xv., Deuteronomy xxxii., Judges v., 1 Sam. ii., Isaiah xii., xxvi., xxxviii., the Benedicite (Dan. iii. in the Vulgate), Jonah i., Habakkuk iii., Judith xvi.; and the

[1] Cardinal de Bausset says, in 1819, that this Bible (Vitry's ed.), containing Fleury's notes, as also some in Bossuet's own handwriting, was in possession of a Paris bookseller named Brajeux.

three great Canticles of the New Testament.[1] In 1693 he further published, with a Latin preface to each, the Books of Solomon,[2]—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs—the latter of which, a year later, he himself translated and published in French for the benefit of the Ursulines of Meaux.[3]

But there were other tasks, more difficult and less congenial, for Bossuet to perform during his Court life, —tasks requiring the most delicate possible handling.

Mme. de la Vallière's faults and her repentance are alike matters of history. Louise Françoise de la Baume le Blanc de la Vallière, born 1644, came of a good Touraine family. Her father, the Governor of Amboise, died early, and her mother marrying again, their child was brought up in the family of Gaston Duke of Orléans, and in 1661 she became maid of honour to Henriette d'Angleterre, wife of Philip Duke of Orléans. Her intellectual powers were small, and her education had not been good, neither was her beauty by any means perfect; but her soft blue eyes and fair hair, the tender and shrinking expression, which truly represented her simple, trusting, straightforward character, made her very attractive in a Court where none of these were ordinary features. Admiration—not always honourable—was lavished on her,—but no lover met with any response save the King, to

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. i. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

whom Louise de la Vallière gave her heart, with a passionate devotion that was the less resisted from her looking upon him as altogether beyond her sphere; and throughout her sad history it is evident that it was the man, not the monarch, whom she loved. Even the cynical Voltaire admits this.[1] The most splendid Court ever known lay at her feet, all its most brilliant fêtes were for her,—but "the little violet," as Mme. de Sevigné calls Mme. de la Vallière,[2] was not happy. Her love for the King and for her children kept her a while in her position of external glory and real deeply felt shame. But when Louis XIV. put the stamp upon her guilt by creating her Duchesse de Vaujour, and legitimatising her children (two only lived, Mademoiselle de Blois, born 1666, married later to the Prince de Conti,[3] and Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Vermandois, born 1667), her agony of shame and repentance at thus receiving a price for her sin led her to fly from the Court, and twice she rushed off to the Convent at Chaillot, where her mistress, the Duchess of Orléans, had been so intimate, and where she herself had friends, intending to break through the guilty chains of passion which bound her.

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 403.

[2] *Lettres*, vol. vii. p. 192: "Cette petite violette, qui se cachoit sous l'herbe, et qui étoit honteuse d'être maîtresse, d'être mère, d'être duchesse: jamais il n'y en aura sur ce moule."

[3] See page 194.

A touching message to the King, in which Mme. de la Vallière let escape that the struggle between affection and repentance was hard, and that the former was likely to triumph, had the natural effect, and after an interview with Louis XIV. she returned to Versailles,[1] where evidently her flight was looked upon as a mere ruse, the better to hold the King's affection.[2] But this was not so, and though the bitter trial of seeing the man she loved faithless to her, as he had been to his Queen, tried her sorely, and her successful rival, Mme. de Montespan, heaped all manner of insult upon her, these were not the only stimulating causes of her penitence. Indeed this latter trial, which would have been simply intolerable to one who met it in a purely worldly spirit, was received by Louise de la Vallière as a direct punishment from God, and as an expiation for her own sin. "Mme. de la Vallière remained under the same roof with Mme. de Montespan," wrote a lady belonging to the Court, "out of the spirit of mortification,—the poor thing fancied that she could not offer a greater sacrifice to God than through the cause of her sin, and she

[1] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. i. p. 322.

[2] Mme. de Sevigné writes, "Mme. de la Vallière ne parle plus d'aucune retraite, c'est assez de l'avoir dit: sa femme de chambre s'est jetée à ses pieds pour l'en empêcher: peut-on résister à cela?"—*Lettres*, vol. iii. p. 264.

thought it all the better that her penitence should be shown in the very quarter where she had fallen."[1]

As has been already said, it is probable that some of the sermons Mme. de la Vallière heard from Bossuet went deeply into her poor quivering heart; so too doubtless did the awfully sudden death of her former mistress, Henriette d'Angleterre;—she never gave up her religious duties even through the saddest parts of her life, and some of Bourdaloue's Lenten sermons, which she heard in common with the King and the Court, impressed her still more powerfully. Indeed, as one reads some of those stern, uncompromising denunciations of vice, one can hardly imagine how any one, not utterly hardened, could have sat week by week and listened to them unmoved.[2] A severe ill-

[1] *Remarques Historiques*, *Œuvres*, vol. xi. p. 258.

[2] See *Sermon sur l'Impureté:* "Il n'y a point de péché, ni qui jette l'homme dans un plus profond aveuglement d'esprit, ni qui l'engage dans des désordres plus funestes, ni qui le captive davantage sous l'empire du démon, ni qui forme dans son cœur un ver de conscience plus insupportable et plus piquant, et tout cela par une vertu qui lui est propre. D'où je conclus, que ce péché est donc un signe manifeste de l'état malheureux de la réprobation," etc.—BOURDALOUE, *Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 93.

See also sermons *Sur l'Aveuglement Spirituel*, *Préparation à la Mort*, etc., etc. Bourdaloue must have had a queer congregation sometimes, judging from contemporary records. For instance, Mme. de Sevigné says, "Le Maréchal de Gramont etoit l'autre jour si transporté de la beauté d'un sermon de Bourdaloue, qu'il s'écria tout haut en un endroit qui le toucha: '*Mon*

ness mercifully confirmed the penitential yearnings which had been once quashed,—and, happily for the poor penitent, she chose for her confidant and guide the Maréchal de Bellefonds, a gallant soldier, more likely to be found leading his troops to battle than acting as Director to a great lady at Court. But so it was, and the Marshal performed his office admirably. His own counsels were such as to lead poor Louise to write to him, November 9, 1673,—"I feel that, notwithstanding the greatness of my faults, love has a still larger influence over the sacrifice I am making than the necessity of repentance." The Marshal, however, sought other help for his penitent friend, and put her into communication not only with his own sister, the Mère Agnés de Bellefonds, Prioress of the Carmelites in the Rue Saint-Jacques, but also with Bossuet, with whom he had been for long on the most intimate terms. After a first interview[1] she wrote to the Marshal that "M. de Condom praises God's Mercy to me, and advises me to fulfil His holy Will promptly. He even

*Dieu, il a raison!*' MADAME éclata de rire, et le sermon en fut tellement interrompa, qu'on ne savoit ce qu'en arriveroit."—*Lettres*, vol. ii. p. 457.

[1] Mme. de la Vallière must frequently have seen Bossuet, but apparently without becoming personally acquainted with him till this time. He would naturally, one may suppose, shun her society, until the occasion for being of use to her, spiritually, arose.

thinks that I shall be able to do so sooner than I imagine."

Soon after we find Bossuet writing to the Maréchal de Bellefonds :—

"SAINT-GERMAIN, *December* 25, 1673.

"Since you left I have seen the Duchesse de la Vallière several times : she is very well disposed, and I hope will act accordingly. A rather stronger nature than hers is would have already done more, but we must not lead her to do what she cannot keep up. For this reason, seeing that it is very much wished to keep her from fulfilling her intention until the departure of the Court, and that possibly still more might be done with the high hand of authority, if there were any very sudden rupture, I have thought it best to make sure of the chief point, and only to loosen gradually the bonds which a stronger hand than hers would have broken at once. What is very satisfactory in her is, that she is not at all frightened at any of the details of the condition she has resolved to embrace, and her resolution grows daily stronger. I do what I can to uphold her in her pious intentions, and if I see any opportunity of forwarding matters, I shall not lose it.

"Other matters are much as usual. M. de Turenne has arrived,—grown very much fatter. He is in very good humour with the King, and the King with him.

Madame de la Vallière has constrained me to speak on the subject of her vocation with Madame de Montespan. I said what was due, and as far as I was able I set forth how wrong it would be to hinder her in her good purposes. There is no great objection to her retirement, but it seems that the idea of the Carmelites is alarming. There has been an attempt to overthrow this intention by dint of ridicule. I hope by and by there will be a different feeling on this head. The King knew that I had been spoken to, but as His Majesty has said nothing to me on the subject, I have also been silent hitherto. I recommend the Duchess to put her affairs in order as speedily as possible. She shrinks exceedingly from speaking to the King, and postpones doing so from day to day. M. Colbert, to whom she has applied as to the temporal side, will not help her speedily, unless she acts with rather more vigour than is her wont."[1]

It was a strange thing, to say the least of it, that Madame de la Vallière should need her rival's intercession to be allowed to retire from the world; but at this time Madame de Montespan was all-powerful, and the King, although he had allowed himself to be entirely separated from Louise de la Vallière, shrank from seeing her so severely punished (for to him a life of penitence in a Carmelite Convent could have no other

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 161.

aspect) for what had been mainly his fault. No wonder that Louis XIV. did not wish to speak on such a subject with Bossuet. The King could not have heard him preach so often without knowing full well that, when the fitting season came, his son's preceptor could "boldly rebuke vice;" and although he was giving up Madame de la Vallière, he had no intention of a similar renunciation with respect to Madame de Montespan. Of that more hereafter.

A month later, Bossuet wrote to the Marshal :—

"SAINT-GERMAIN, *January* 27, 1674.

"I received your letter, and myself took yours inclosed to the Duchess. The world has dealt very hardly with her, and God very mercifully. I hope that He will win the day, and that one day we shall see her attain a very real holiness. I write now from her room: she has shown me your letter, wherein I see strong marks of M. de Grénoble.

"Alas! when shall we repair the evil which we do and cause to be done? All our words and looks are fertile in mischief, which we spread abroad; some we grieve; others we teach to love the world. We give way either to weak attachments, or to scornful dislikes; we are ill-regulated, because we are wanting in the ruling spirit of charity, and our want of regulation demoralises others. Insensibly we impart to others what

we feel ourselves, and our own self-love is so great, that we incite others to self-love. This is what may be called the contagion of the world: there is a corruption of others deliberately made, but that is coarser, and more easily perceived. But the sort of contamination which we impart without thinking, which is spread merely by seeing what others do, which is conveyed by tones of voice and expression of countenance,—this it is which above all needs to call forth the frequent cry, 'Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults, and from those which I cause others to commit!' Until such time as truth shall reign within us, vanity and lying will pour forth from out of us, and infect all around."[1]

"VERSAILLES, *February* 8, 1674.

"I have given your letters to the Duchesse de la Vallière: they seem to me to have a good effect on her. She is in much the same mind, and I think that she gets her affairs forward after her own fashion, slowly and gently. But if I am not mistaken, her actions are inwardly strengthened by God's Grace, and the uprightness which I perceive in her heart will overcome everything. . . . I gave your compliments to Madame N. She is better than the world gives her credit for being, but not so good as she thinks herself, for she still mis-

[1] Vol. xxvi. p. 162.

takes a slender wish to be good for goodness itself, and that is a dangerous delusion for beginners."[1]

"VERSAILLES, *March* 3, 1674.

"I have kept back my answer a long time, as well as two letters from the Duchesse de la Vallière, meaning to give them to M. Desvaux, and finally I gave them to Mère Agnés. It was not hard to find a good reception for your letters to the Duchesse; she receives them joyfully, and is greatly touched by them. It appears to me that her affairs are making progress, without any effort on her part. God does not forsake her, and without any violence He is loosening her bonds. She does not say anything about final arrangements, but I think they will come soon, and that the great step will be taken; at all events, she is very well disposed for it."[2]

"VERSAILLES, *April* 6, 1674.

"I send you a letter from Madame de la Vallière, which will show you that by God's Grace she is going to carry out the intentions His Holy Spirit has put into her heart. The whole Court is astonished and edified at her calmness and cheerfulness, which increase as the time draws nearer. Indeed, there is something so heavenly in her mind, that I cannot think of it without a continual thanksgiving, and I see

[1] Vol. xxvi. p. 163. [2] *Ibid.* p. 166.

the Finger of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, in the strength and humility of all her thoughts. Her affairs have been arranged with a wonderful ease; she breathes nought save penitence, and without being afraid of the austere life she is about to embrace, she looks forward to its end with a hope which causes her to forget the intermediate suffering. I am both delighted and dumbfoundered! I talk, and she acts! I say all the words, she does all the deeds! When I dwell upon all these things, I enter fully into the longing for silence and retirement, and I cannot utter a word but what sounds like my own condemnation."[1]

Madame de la Vallière's only remaining struggle seems to have been quitting her child, Mademoiselle de Blois, now twelve years old, and leaving her surrounded by perils which no one could better estimate than herself. The little girl was brought up by Madame Colbert, and child as she was she was already in the world, according to the custom of the day. Madame de Sevigné, in January 1674, describes a visit to Madame Colbert, when "Mademoiselle de Blois danced: she is a prodigy of charms and grace. . . . The Duchesse de la Vallière was there: she calls her daughter *Mademoiselle*, and the Princess calls her *belle Maman*. M. de Vermandois was there too."[2] And again: "The

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 168. [2] *Lettres*, vol. iii. p. 303.

balls are full of little children. . . . Mademoiselle de Blois is a *chef-d'œuvre:* the King and everybody else is enchanted with her. In the middle of a ball she came up to Madame de Richelieu, asking, 'Madame, can you tell me if the King is pleased with me?' All sorts of pretty sayings come out of her charming mouth; she fascinates people with her wit, of which no one could have more."[1]

This was the daughter, and such her position, for whom, nevertheless, Louise de la Vallière was forced to feel she could do nothing by remaining in the world, but teach her child that a Duchy can gild shame!

"I have but one step more to take," she wrote to her friend, the Maréchal de Bellefonds. "I can readily give up riches and grandeur, but my feelings are strong, and what you were told about Mademoiselle de Blois is quite true. I love her, but she will not keep me back a moment. I leave her without pain, though I see her with delight. This sounds like a contradiction, but nevertheless it is true. I must speak to the King; that is the worst. Pray to God for me, that He may give me the courage I need to do this." And again, on March 19, the Duchess wrote: "At last I quit the world, without regret, but not without pain. My weakness has kept me in it a

[1] *Lettres*, vol. iii. p. 317.

long time without any taste for it;—I might rather say, amid infinite vexations. You know most of them, and you also know the keenness of my feelings. I am conscious daily that this is not diminished, and I am well aware that the future would give me no more satisfaction than the past or the present."

It was on April 20, 1674, that, all hindrances removed, Madame de la Vallière finally left the world and retired to the Carmelites' House. She was not thirty at the time. The first day of her arrival she had her beautiful hair cut off, and asked for the religious habit, and the next day she wrote: "I am so calm and so satisfied, that I cannot be sufficiently grateful to God for His Goodness to me."

The coarse serge dress, the plain food, abstinence and fasting, toil, strict silence and inward mortification of the Carmelites' life, were all so many welcome tests to the sincerity of her craving for a real repentance; indeed, she would fain have found the rule harder and more severe. Her ardent zeal, her absolute submission and earnest penitence, led to the shortening of her probation, and on the 2nd June she was admitted to the *vêture* or *prise d'habit*. Madame de la Vallière had asked Bossuet to preach the sermon customary on these occasions, and he had promised to do so; but when the time came he was in atterdance as Aumônier on the Dauphin, who was beginning his

military career at the siege of Dol, where Louis XIV. commanded in person. Bourdaloue, who was next asked, was also unable for some reason to be present, and the sermon was preached by the Abbé de Fromentières, afterwards Bishop of Aire. The postulant took the name of Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde. She asked to be permitted to be a lay sister only, but this was refused, and she could only obtain a promise that she should share freely in the hardest work of the Community. How little her real mind could be understood by the Court she had left may be gathered from Madame de Sevigné's chatter on the subject:

"I want to tell you about the Duchesse de la Vallière," she writes to the Comte de Guitard; "the poor thing has drunk the very dregs of everything; she would not spare herself a tear or an adieu. She is gone to the Carmelites, where for a week she saw her children and all the Court; that is, all that remains of it. She has had all her beautiful hair cut off, but she has kept two nice curls on her forehead. She talks away and tells marvels! She declares that she delights in her solitude, and she fancies herself in a desert, chained up to that grating!"[1]

Bossuet's account to the Mère Agnés de Bellefonds is probably truer, as it is certainly more satisfactory:—

[1] *Lettres*, vol. iii. p. 340.

"SAINT-GERMAIN, *March* 19, 1675.

"Since the last interview I had with ma Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde, I feel as though I could do nothing but perpetually pour myself out in acts of thanksgiving for her. I had not seen her for four months, and I found her gone so much farther in the ways of God, with such true light and such clear and strong convictions, that one cannot but see the work of the Holy Spirit therein. As far as I am able to judge, this soul will prove a very miracle of grace. All she needs is some one who can teach her to open her heart, and who knows how to lead her on, without letting her be conscious of it herself. God has laid the foundations of great things in that heart of hers. Indeed, it is altogether a 'new creature,' and I am more than ever satisfied with the appropriateness of my text.[1] I quite expect, dear and reverend Mother, that I shall preach the sermon, for it does not seem as if we should travel at present. I am sincerely glad of it, and I pray most heartily that God may enable me to say some helpful word to this soul. My soul travails therewith, and I know not how or when it will bring forth. Pray, my dear Mother, that the Uncreated Word, conceived eternally in the Bosom of the Father, and in time

[1] Bossuet had chosen the words, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5), as the text for his sermon on the occasion of Madame de la Vallière's approaching profession.

clothed with flesh for the sake of man, may fill my mind. Do not let ma Sœur Anne Marie de Jésus forget me before God. I always put you two together, and as a third I join ma Sœur Louise to you. May the Holy Trinity bless you all three. May the Holy Trinity give us all one heart and one soul to love God in the spirit of peace. So be it."[1]

It was on June 4,[2] 1675, that Madame de la Vallière took the solemn vows which separated her for ever from the world wherein she had lived so conspicuous a sinner —so much more remarkable a penitent. So singular a scene as the Convent Church presented on that bright summer's morning probably has never been seen: no country save France, no period save that of Louis XIV., could have afforded it. There, in the Chapel of an Order vowed to the extremest asceticism, was assembled in gorgeous attire, only half overawed by the unusual solemnity of the occasion, scarce hushing their idle *cacquet*, the whole fine world of the Court and of all Paris, to gaze upon and gossip over the intense, heartfelt, though no longer bitter, penitence of one of the most lovely women who had ever adorned that fine world. They gazed upon the injured Queen Marie

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 175.

[2] Cardinal Bausset gives the 26th June as the date, but various contemporary records prove the earlier day to be the correct one.

Thérèse, whose only blame seems to have been her utter endurance, patient and unfailing, of every wrong that could be heaped upon her,—this Queen they beheld leading the rival who had helped to poison her happiness, who had caused her bitterest tears, her keenest pangs of wifely jealousy—now, according to the Queen's own opinions, so much happier than herself![1]—to the Altar. How strange, how intensely moving must have been her thoughts, as she went through the ceremonial of covering her rival with the pall which intimated that rival's death to the world! Beside the Queen was another lady, well known once as the profligate Duchesse de Longueville,[2] but who now had numbered more than twenty years of a life

[1] Marie Thérèse, when seeking shelter as she was wont to do in some religious house, before any of the great festivals, had often astonished the nuns among whom she went by her austerities, and in answer to their comments, she would say, "Ah, dear Sisters, your prayers and penitence give me a thousand times more pleasure than the theatres and the hollow amusements of the Court!"—*Remarques Historiques*, vol. xii. p. 500.

[2] Madame de Longueville's career will not bear detail. She was one of the three ladies of whom Cardinal Mazarin said to Don Louis de Haro, "Nous en avons trois entre autres, qui nous mettent en plus de confusion qu'il n'y en eut jamais en Babylone." Her political intrigues during the minority of Louis XIV. and in the Fronde were only to be equalled by her intrigues of a more personal character. When at length she forsook her former ways and became *dévote*, the world amid which she had lived could only see a fresh intrigue in her devotion! "Femme singulière," wrote Grouvelle, "qui eut le talent de faire encore

of penitence, and who must have looked with a strange half-sympathy, half-envy, at the younger, perhaps more real, penitent before her. The King was not present. Perhaps it was hardly to be expected that he should assist at a ceremony which conveyed so deep though silent a sentence of condemnation upon himself. Why was Louise de la Vallière only to do penance for the sin in which he had at least his full share? and might not the same Divine Justice which required of her so utter and ample a self-sacrifice exact of the guilty King a further separation from Madame de Montespan, the ruler for the time being of his heart, if heart he possessed? Already Bossuet was involved in negotiations concerning this lady, which must have added in no small degree to the delicacy and difficulty of his present task in speaking the truth, yet without giving such offence as might hinder his hopes of withdrawing the King from his unlawful connection with Madame de Montespan.

It was not an easy task which the great preacher had undertaken, and when he gave out his text from the

du bruit en faisant son salut, et de se sauver sur la même planche de l'enfer et de l'ennui!"

Some one remarked once in the presence of her brother, the Grand Condé, that "tous les dévote étoient des gens sans esprit." "Je ne sais trop ce que c'est que dévotion," the great soldier replied, "mais je sais bien que ma sœur n'est pas une sotte!"

Book of Revelation, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new," many present must have marvelled how he would reconcile the various conflicting elements with which he had to deal.

"It will be a grand spectacle, doubtless," he began, "when He Who sitteth on the Throne whence the universe is ruled—He Who can do as readily as He saith, inasmuch as by the Word of His Mouth He can do all things—when He shall from that Throne, at the end of the world, make known that He reneweth everything; and when at the same time we behold all nature changed into a new world prepared for God's elect. But when, in order to prepare us for these marvellous changes hereafter, He works secretly in the hearts of men by His Holy Spirit, changing, kindling, renewing them utterly, filling them with aspirations hitherto unknown, it is a no less wonderful sight. Nothing, Christians, can be more marvellous than these changes we behold. What have we seen? and what do we see? What formerly, and what now? No need for me to dwell upon them—these things speak for themselves.

"Madame, this is a spectacle worthy of the presence and of the gaze of a religious Queen. Your Majesty does not come hither to bring worldly pomp into this solitude: your humility moves you to take part in the lowliness of the religious life, and it is well that you,

whose position so often constrains you to take part in the world's display, should sometimes bear your share in such ceremonies as teach us to despise it. Come then and marvel with me at these great changes worked by the Hand of God. All that was of the old man is put away from without, and within the change is greater yet; while to celebrate these pious novelties I myself am breaking the silence of years, and a voice long unheard awakes these holy echoes."[1] Then followed a withering summary of what the glory of this world is worth—a picture of Alexander the Great, greedy of fame, "desiring to make a noise in the world in his life, and after his death. And he had his wish—no one ever made such a name: . . . he lives yet on men's lips, his glory uneffaced by the course of ages. It is not the glory that is lacking to him, but where is he to receive the glory?"

The whole tone of the sermon is grave, close in application, severe. "Go and ponder thereon," the preacher said towards the end; "do not dwell upon him who speaks to you, whether he has spoken well or ill; what matters it how a mortal man speaks? There is an invisible Preacher speaking to your hearts—and to Him preachers and listeners alike must give heed."

Perhaps these words fell coldly on the ears of those to whom the higher side of penitence was a

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xi. p. 563.

mystery, and who looked upon the solemn scene of that day as a Court spectacle only.

"The Duchesse de la Vallière was professed yesterday," Mme. de Sevigné writes, June 5, 1675. "Madame de Villars had promised to take me, and then, through some misunderstanding, we thought we should not find places. We might have got in, although the Queen had said that she would not have the ceremony thrown open; anyhow, we were not to be there, and Madame de Villars was very much disappointed. This beautiful and brave woman performed this last action, like all the others of her life, nobly and charmingly. Everybody raved about her beauty; but what will surprise you is, that M. de Condom's sermon was not so divine as was expected."[1]

Bossuet wrote to Maréchal de Bellefonds, June 20, 1675:—

"Ma sœur Louise de la Miséricorde has at last achieved her sacrifice. She is really a miracle of grace."[2]

Louise de la Vallière's remaining years bore testimony to the reality of her repentance. The Carmelite rule is ascetic, but she delighted in going beyond it. All her life she kept up the practice of rising two hours before the Community, spending the time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. She had to be

[1] *Lettres*, vol. iii. p. 404. [2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 179.

restrained in the bodily mortifications and self-denials she sought to practise in spite of delicate health and much physical suffering. She was much sought after in her retirement—by some, doubtless, out of curiosity, by others out of a better motive; but she discouraged visitors as much as possible. In the autumn of 1676 her brother, M. de la Vallière, died,[1] and she was induced to ask some favour of the King on her nephew's behalf, which Louis XIV. granted, saying that "if he were *assez homme de bien* to see so saintly a Carmelite, he would come himself and tell her how much he sympathised in her loss."[2] The Queen occasionally visited her, and on one occasion, having asked if she was satisfied with her condition, Sœur Louise answered, "*Non, je ne suis pas aise, mais je suis contente.*"

A curious inroad was made upon her conventual life in the winter of 1679, when all the Court thought fit in turn to go and congratulate the Duchess on her daughter's marriage. "Mademoiselle de Blois' marriage promises well," Mme. de Sevigné writes, Dec. 29. "The King bade her tell her mother what he is doing for her; all the world has been to pay their compliments to that pious Carmelite; I hope Mme. de

[1] Governor and Grand-Sénéchal of the Province de Bourbonnois.

[2] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. v. p. 170.

Coulanges will take me to-morrow. M. le Prince (de Conti) and the Duke hastened to her, and it is said that she adapts her style perfectly to her black veil, and mingles her maternal tenderness with that suitable to the bride of Christ. The King marries her daughter as if she were the Queen's child being married to the King of Spain! He gives her five hundred thousand gold crowns, as is usual in such cases, only with the difference that these will be paid, and the others seldom do more than grace the contract. This gay wedding is to be on Jan. 15."[1]

And a few days later, having paid the promised visit, Mme. de Sevigné describes it thus:—

"What an angel appeared at last! for the Prince de Conti detained her some time. To my eyes she retains all her old beauty. I thought her neither puffy or yellow. She is not so thin, and looks happier. She has just the same eyes, and the same way of looking at you. Austerity, bad food, and want of sleep have not dimmed her eyes or made them hollow, and her queer habit does not in the least lessen her gracefulness or *bon air*. Her modesty is much the same as when she became mother of a Princesse de Conti, but it is suitable to a Carmelite. She spoke very pleasantly to me. . . . M. de Conti loves and honours her devotedly. . . . She is his directress."[2]

[1] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 276. [2] *Ibid.* p. 286.

It was no longer the fine world, but Bossuet only, who went, in 1683, to tell Sœur Louise of the death of her son, the Duc de Vermandois. At first the mother's heart burst forth in sobs and tears at the tidings; but then, collecting herself, she said touchingly, "I ought to weep for his birth far more than for his death;"[1] and, hastening to pray before the Altar, she returned shortly, calm and composed. The triumph of charity was yet before Louise de la Vallière, when she ministered to and comforted the woman who had treated her so cruelly in the day of her power—Mme. de Montespan.

She died June 6, 1710. The day before her death, Sœur Louise, though bowed down with infirmities, rose, as was her wont, at 3 A.M., for prayer; but her strength failed her before she could reach the Chapel, and a lay Sister found her in the corridor, where she had fallen. She was carried to her bed, and, having received the last Sacraments, her long life of penitence closed peacefully.

A more difficult and less satisfactory work fell to Bossuet with respect to Mme. de Montespan. This lady, Athénaïs de Mortemar, and her two sisters, Mme. de Thiange and the Abbess of Fontevrand, were among the most beautiful women in France, and their brother, the Duc de Vivonne, a Marshal of

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. i. p. 418.

France, was one of the most brilliant and literary men at Court.[1] Her empire over Louis XIV. was of a wholly different kind to that of Mme. de la Vallière, from whom she had estranged the King. Proud and imperious, she exercised the power of vehemence and resolution to a degree of which the King was for long quite unconscious.

At this time—the spring of 1675—her connection with the King (notwithstanding that her husband, Louis de Gondrin, Marquis de Montespan, was living) was notorious, and she had two sons, the Duc de Maine and the Comte de Venin, acknowledged by him. On Maunday-Thursday of that year Mme. de Montespan went to confession to a priest called Lécuyer, who, as a faithful servant of Christ, could but refuse her absolution. Indignant at the affront, though not ashamed of its cause, Mme. de Montespan complained to the King, who sent for M. Thibaut, the Curé of Versailles. Of course the Curé had only to say that the priest in question was perfectly right. The King's own conscience must have told him the same; but, before taking any further steps, he consulted the Duc de Montausier, Governor to the

[1] Voltaire tells of him, that Louis XIV., asking one day, "*Mais à quoi sert bon de lire?*" the Duc de Vivonne, who was fat and well-liking, replied, "La lecture fait à l'esprit ce que vos perdrix font à mes joues."—*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 424.

Dauphin, and M. de Condom, "of whose doctrine he thinks so highly," Mme. de Maintenon wrote. Bossuet replied unhesitatingly, like the Curé, that the Abbé Lécuyer had done no more than his duty, and the Duke having expressed the same opinion, Bossuet again addressed the King, and spoke with such earnestness and force that Louis XIV. was greatly moved, and took leave of his advisers with the emphatic promise not to see the lady in question again.[1] Accordingly Mme. de Montespan received orders to leave the Court, and she was sent to Paris, where, at the King's desire, Bossuet visited her every evening, endeavouring to convince her of the fitness and necessity of this separation. Vainly, however. Hers was not the really religious mind or tender conscience of Louise de la Vallière; and she was accustomed to believe herself irresistible and absolute, so that Bossuet was met only by the wildest, most insulting reproaches. The unhappy woman did not hesitate to accuse him of trying to detach the King from her, in order to gain influence over his mind for purposes of the Bishop's own;[2] and, when tired of invective and vehemence, which were only met by patience and gentleness on Bossuet's part, she changed

[1] "Je ne la verrai plus."

[2] In after years she owned that she had made private investigations as to his life, hoping to find some ground for accusation.

her tone, and began to try what flattery would do, offering to obtain every conceivable appointment in Church and State for him, the Cardinal's hat included, if he would but take her part now. Later on an attempt was made by a renegade priest to assert that Bossuet had been privately married in his early life to a certain Mademoiselle de Mauléon, and Voltaire, always ready to receive any cry that might be damaging to religion, took up the story.[1] It is not necessary here to go into all the chain of proofs which utterly refute the assertion. Enough that, at the alleged period of the marriage, the lady was not born! When Dean of Metz, Bossuet was intimate with her aunt, a devout lady attached to the household of Henriette, Duchess of Orléans, and not unnaturally often noticed the little girl, then nine years old. In after days he befriended her, to the extent of becoming *caution-naire* for her in certain difficulties arising concerning her inheritance—a *halle au poisson*,—which proved a troublesome dowry for a woman. Her gratitude was lasting, and in his last illness she came to visit him. Such is the real history of Bossuet's connection with Madlle. de Mauléon,[2] which, had it been possible, Mme. de Montespan would have been only too glad to prove as a blot on his character, in her furious anger.

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 107, etc.

[2] *Mémoires de Le Dieu*, vol. iii. p. 88.

A letter from Bossuet to the Maréchal de Bellefonds shows how trying these events were to him:—

"*June* 20, 1675.

"Pray for me, I beseech you, and ask God to free me from the heaviest burden which can be laid upon a man, or at least to put to death all that is earthly in me, so that I may act in and through Him Only. Thank God, through the whole course of this business I have not once thought of myself. But that is not enough—one ought to be a St. Ambrose, a true man of God, altogether of another world, whose every act might preach, whose every word were an oracle of the Holy Spirit, whose whole demeanour were heavenly. God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the things which are not to bring to nought things that are;[1] but to do this one ought not 'to be,'—that is, one ought to be nothing whatever in one's own eyes—emptied of one's self and wholly filled of God."[2]

For a time the prospect seemed hopeful: Louis XIV. appeared to be in earnest; he rather took pride in making public his resolutions, though it may be that most of those who knew the King shared Bourdaloue's feeling, who, when Louis addressed him with, "Mon Père, you ought to be well pleased with me—Mme. de Montespan is at Clugny!" replied, "Yes,

[1] 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. [2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 179.

Sire, but God would be better pleased if Clugny were seventy miles from Versailles!" However, the King appeared so determined to do what was right, that he was permitted to make his Easter Communion, after which he went off with the army without having seen Mme. de Montespan, or even writing to her. Bossuet continued to visit her, at the King's desire, and she appeared to be more amenable to his counsels; at all events, she gave largely to the poor, under his influence, and he was hopeful about her. Some letters of Bossuet's to the King, written at this period, prove that he believed in the genuineness of the King's good intentions, as well as the respect in which he held his own office as God's minister:—

"Sire,—The Day of Pentecost, when your Majesty proposes to communicate, draws near. Although I doubt not that you think seriously about that which you have promised to God, I bear in mind your orders that I should remind you of it, and this seems a time which obliges me to do so. Remember, Sire, that you can know no true conversion unless you endeavour to root out from your heart, not your sin only, but its original cause. Holy Scripture tells us that true conversion is not satisfied merely to crush the fruits of death—it goes to the root, which will infallibly grow again if not torn up. This is not the work of a day, I grant; but the longer and more difficult it is, so

much greater the need to labour diligently. Your Majesty would not think that you had thoroughly subdued a rebel town while the original promoter of rebellion remained in office there. And so your heart will never be at peace with God so long as this violent love, which has so long estranged you from Him, reigns therein.

"But, Sire, it is the heart which God requires. Your Majesty knows the terms in which He bids us give it to Him wholly; you promised me to read those words, and re-read them frequently. I send you, Sire, more and not less urgent words, spoken by the Same God, which I beseech your Majesty to place with the first. I have given them to Madame de Montespan, and they caused her to shed many tears. And of a truth, Sire, there is no fitter cause for tears than the consciousness of having pledged to a human being the heart which God claims for Himself. How difficult it is to loosen the bonds of so unhappy and fatal an entanglement! Nevertheless, Sire, it must be done, or there is no hope of salvation. Jesus Christ, Whom you are about to receive, will give you strength, as He has given you the wish, to do it.

"I do not ask you, Sire, to extinguish in one moment so violent a flame—it were impossible; but, Sire, endeavour gradually to diminish it, dread to fan it. Turn your heart to God, think often of the obli-

gation which lies on you to love Him with all your strength; think, too, of the sad state of a heart which is so cumbered with creature love as to be unable to give itself to God, to Whom that heart is due.

"I hope, Sire, that the great interests which day by day occupy your Majesty more and more will help towards your cure. Much is said of the perfection of your troops, and of what they are capable under so great a leader, and I, Sire, the while, think within myself of a more important war, and a far more difficult victory, which God puts before you.

"Sire, meditate on these words of the Son of God, which seem uttered on purpose for mighty kings and conquerors: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' What will it profit you, Sire, to be victorious and redoubtable externally, if within you are vanquished and a captive? Pray, then, that God would set you free. I ask it with all my heart. My anxiety for your salvation increases day by day, inasmuch as every day I see your danger more vividly.

"Sire, grant me a favour: desire Père de la Chaise to let me know something about you. I shall indeed be thankful, Sire, if he should tell me that distance and occupation are beginning to have the good results we hoped for. This is a precious time. At a distance from all dangerous occasions, you can consult your

real needs quietly, you can form resolutions and make rules for your conduct. May God bless your Majesty; may He give your Majesty victory, and with victory peace within and without. The more your Majesty gives your heart in all sincerity to God, the more you put all your trust and confidence in Him, the more He will protect you with His All-powerful Hand.

"I see Madame de Montespan as often as I can, in compliance with your Majesty's commands. She is fairly calm; she occupies herself largely in good works, and she is very much moved by the truths I lay before her, which indeed are the same as those I have put to your Majesty. May God impress them on the hearts of both, and perfect His work in you, so that all the tears and struggles and efforts which you have made may not be in vain.

"I say nothing about Mgr. the Dauphin. M. de Montausier will give you a faithful report of him.

"I am, with profound respect and submission, Sire, de votre Majesté le très humble, très obeissant, et très fidèle sujet et serviteur, J. BÉNIGNE,

"Anc. Év. de Condom."[1]

The next letter, written a little later (July 10, 1675), is evidently a reply to one from Louis XIV., asking for advice concerning his general life; for Bossuet

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 180.

says, "You do well to set yourself seriously to regulate your conduct, for after having dealt so strictly with yourself in a matter which touches you so deeply, you are not likely to neglect your other duties which agree with your inclinations." Giving the King various counsels as to the laws which should rule him, Bossuet says, "Your people, Sire, expect more than ever to see you guided by God's laws. They have been greatly comforted by the open profession made by your Majesty of your intention to put away those things which made your life displeasing to God, and they are convinced thereby that you will be doubly attentive to the obligation He has laid on you to watch over their troubles."

This letter (which is a long one) was written, accompanied or speedily followed by a paper called an "Instruction," *Quelle est la dévotion d'un Roi;* in which Bossuet gives the love of God as the foundation and touchstone of the whole fabric. Bossuet himself, years after (August 23, 1701), said that, after reading it, the King said, "I have never heard anything about that—no one ever told me about it." He points out how "a king may practise the Love of God, and of his neighbour (which flows from it), at every moment of his life: so far from his manifold occupations hindering it, that love will enable him to perform them with vigour, with gentleness, with inward satisfaction, and

a peace of conscience which exceeds worldly joys. . . . What, then, has the King to alter in his life in giving himself to God? Nothing, save sin. . . . There is no need for long prayers or much reading, which is wearisome to those unaccustomed to it, or the like. One prays to God coming and going, when one turns to Him with the heart. Let the King say his usual prayers heartily, and that is enough. All outward things will be the same, that sin only excepted which disorders his life, dishonours, disturbs it, and which involves the rigorous punishment of God in this world and in the next. What a blessing to be able to put away so great an evil!"[1]

But unhappily, Bossuet gave his royal penitent credit for a more stedfast will to put away sin than Louis XIV. possessed. While he was thus striving to strengthen the King's resolution to keep the promises he had made before the whole nation, Madame de Montespan's friends were doing their best to bring her back to Court, and the crowd of idle, profligate courtiers who felt their own vices condoned by a Sovereign's example, or who dreaded the prospect of a stricter, less voluptuous life at Court, threw all their weight on the wrong side. Madame de Montespan was *Surintendante* of the Queen's household, and the much-injured Queen had always been gracious to her,

[1] Vol. xxvi. p. 187.

and the chattering courtiers said that it was unfair to deprive the lady of her office and position on account of what was more the King's fault than hers. Moreover, they pleaded that with his present intentions all scandal had ceased to exist; that the King would henceforth have nothing to do with her save as an attendant on the Queen; and they went so far as to say that it was unworthy of the King's firmness of character to suppose it necessary to banish Madame de Montespan after the decision he had come to.

Louis XIV. was only too ready to hear the devil's advocates pleading against his better conscience. Absence had quickened his feelings for Madame de Montespan, and before his return to Versailles he sent orders that she was to be there when he arrived!

Bossuet heard the tidings, and, faithful to his office, he determined to make one more effort, cost what it might, to keep the King from undoing all he had attempted to do. He went forth, and some eight miles from Versailles met the King. His saddened countenance told its tale, and directly that Louis XIV. saw him, he closed the Bishop's lips by saying, "Do not speak to me. I have given orders that apartments may be prepared at Versailles for Madame de Montespan." What could Bossuet do but retire mournfully, sorrowing over the inconstancy of purpose shown by his Royal Master?

The unhallowed bonds were renewed, and the daughter afterwards married to the Regent Duke of Orléans, and the Comte de Toulouse, were both born after this period.[1]

But Madame de Montespan's day was destined to pass in her turn. For a time she continued the principal figure in the Court scene; but her attractions began to lose their power over the King, and her vehement reproaches were not calculated to win him back. Mademoiselle de Fontanges became a dangerous rival, and Madame de Maintenon grew daily more necessary to Louis XIV., whose "tormented soul,"[2] Voltaire says, "required the sedative of her reasonable, intellectual conversation," after the death of the Duchesse de Fontanges and her son, in 1681, until Madame de Montespan "possessed no more than a heart weary of her and her murmurs."[3] In 1685 the King married one of his daughters by Madame de Montespan, commonly called Mademoiselle de Nantes,

[1] "Les mondains spirituels et malins lui pardonnent peu de s'être laissé duper par Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, ou plutôt par la passion du cœur, et pour avoir vu les deux amants bien et dûment et confessés, absous et admis à la réconciliation pendant un jubilé, de les avoir crus si solidement convertis qu'ils pussent ensuite se revoir à la Cour sans danger, devant témoins." —SAINT BEUVE, vol. ii. p. 340. But this is hardly true, as Bossuet's interview with the King proves. He would fain have hindered the meeting, had it been possible.

[2] *Siècle*, vol. i. p. 438.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 1.

to the grandson of the Great Condé, and after this Madame de Montespan altogether disappeared from Court life.

After the disappointment of his hopes, Bossuet nevertheless continued to see Madame de Montespan occasionally at the house of her sister, Madame de Thianges; but he never permitted any intimacy or intercourse that could infringe upon the dignity of his office. The lady herself testified genuine respect for and confidence in him, and after she left the Court he saw her more frequently than before. Madame de Montespan was supposed to be "converted," and Madame de Miramion was considered the chief agent in her conversion;[1] but unlike Louise de la Vallière, she did not even nominally forsake the world until the world forsook her, and at no time does her life seem to have taken a character of true repentance. She certainly retired for a time to the Convent of the Filles de Saint Joseph, in the Quartier Montmartre, but it scarcely seems to have been in order to devote herself to religious exercises;[2] and soon after she bought a château called Petit-Bourg, between Paris and Fontainebleau, and resided chiefly there, leaving it even-

[1] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. ix. p. 133.

[2] "Madame de Montespan ouvrit hier sa porte (à S. Joseph), et, couchée dans son lit, elle reçut les compliments de tous ceux qui voulurent lui en aller faire."—*Ibid.* vol. ix. p. 145.

tually to the Duc d'Autin, one of her sons by Louis XIV.[1]

Once, in 1695, being at Trêves, in the diocese of Meaux, Madame de Montespan, accompanied by her sister, the Abbess of Fontevrauld, and the Duke and Duchess of Nevers, went to see Bossuet at Germigny. In April 1691, Louis XIV. consulted Bossuet as to a tutor for the Comte de Toulouse; and probably the autograph letter on this subject speaks truly enough in the conclusion, where the King says, "Believe that it is impossible to have greater esteem for any one than mine for you, united to the most entire confidence."[2]

There was another phase of Bossuet's life at this time, probably more satisfactory to his own mind as Christ's minister. Turenne's conversion from Protestantism has been already mentioned; his example had great weight with many, among others with a niece, Mademoiselle de Duras, whose mother was a sister of Turenne's, and a staunch Protestant. This lady was a lady-in-waiting to MADAME, and both her high connexions and her own intellectual capacity gave her large influence. Shaken in her confidence as to Calvinism, she read Bossuet's "Exposition" carefully, and the result was a strong desire to consult him and hear his explanation of certain matters. But feeling her own incompetence as a woman to discuss

[1] *Lettres*, vol. ix. p. 160. [2] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 79.

or argue theological questions, and wishing to be perfectly honest and fair in her judgment, Mademoiselle de Duras felt that she should like to hear the matters on which she was doubtful discussed by one of the Protestant ministers she had learnt to respect, and she communicated with Bossuet through the Duc de Richelieu, asking whether he would consent to meet M. Claude, one of the leading Protestant pastors of the day, at her house. Claude was a deservedly esteemed man;—he had been a *pasteur* at Nismes and at Montauban, and a member of the Consistory of Charenton, and was acknowledged as one of the most learned and eloquent among the Protestants of his time. After some delay, Bossuet and M. Claude met, on March 1, 1678, at the house of Comtesse de Roye, a sister of Madlle. de Duras, and a considerable number of persons assembled to hear the discussion—chiefly Protestants, the wife of Maréchal de Lorge (another sister) excepted. The discussion turned chiefly on the authority of the Church itself, a point on which Madlle. de Duras felt that the whole matter depended. It lasted for five hours, and Bossuet, in his own account thereof, says that M. Claude defended his position most skilfully.[1] It is not necessary to follow the line of Bossuet's argument, which is familiar to all Churchmen, proving that

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xiii. p. 503.

Protestants, who profess to reject the Church's authority in order to take their stand upon that of Holy Scripture, can have no foundation whatever—they cannot tell whether that Scripture be true or false. "I could not believe the Gospel," S. Augustine says, "were I not to receive it on the authority of the Church."[1] Madlle. de Duras was finally convinced of the errors of her early education, and on the 22nd of that same month she was received into the Church by Bossuet. In the evening of the very day of the conference, Bossuet had related what took place to the Duc and Duchesse de Richelieu, the Bishop of Mirepoix, and some others; and as they requested him to commit to writing what appeared to them valuable as a clear and useful statement of true doctrine, he sat down, and in their presence wrote an account of the conference with great rapidity. This paper was circulated in manuscript for some time, but after a while, as generally happens, inaccuracies slipped into the copies made, and at length Bossuet felt obliged to rewrite the paper, especially as Claude had written a counter-statement based on certain mistakes which had arisen. Bossuet proposed another conference to Claude, which the *pasteur* refused, on the ground that such proceedings were forbidden by the King. This difficulty was easily

[1] *Cont. fund. Manich.*

removed; and Louis XIV. gave all requisite authorisation and pledges of security to Claude, but he never would face Bossuet again. Bossuet published the discussion under the title of "Conférence avec M. Claude," in 1682, and in a second edition he added Claude's paper, with some "Réflexions" of his own upon it.[1]

Madlle. de Duras died at Saint-Cloud in 1689, having the comfort of Bossuet's spiritual ministrations on her deathbed.

The celebrated Duc de la Rochefoucauld (author of "Les Maximes," which Voltaire says tended more than any other book to form the national taste, and give it a tone of "*justesse et précision*"[2]) was another friend of Bossuet's, to whose last hours he was called upon to minister. After a life of excitement and distraction, political, literary and courtier-like, the Duke died calmly and hopefully. "Il est fort bien disposé pour sa conscience," Mme. de Sevigné writes, March 15, 1680;[3] and on the 17th "at midnight he breathed his last in the arms of M. de Condom."[4]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xiii. p. 506.

[2] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 105. [3] *Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 401.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 404. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld had been intimately connected with the Duchesse de Longueville, who betrayed his confidence both in love and politics. She died a short month after him, and Mme. de Sevigné, after being present at the Duchess's "Oraison funèbre," remarks, "Il y avoit bien à rêver sur ces deux noms."—Vol. vi. p. 447.

At this time, too, Bossuet was engaged in an active correspondence with many persons of importance; comforting the Maréchal de Bellefonds under his disgrace with the King, and discussing theological questions with him;—going into various learned matters with M. Dirois, a doctor of la Sorbonne, with Mabillon the eminent Benedictine, and many others. His correspondence with Pope Innocent XI. and Cardinal Cibo were all doubtless part of the chain of circumstances which was gradually drawing Bossuet on to one of the most important epochs of his life as regards the Church of France—the Great Assembly of 1682.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BOSSUET IN THE ASSEMBLY.

BOSSUET THOUGHT OF AS ARCHBISHOP OF LYONS — BISHOP OF SENS, BEAUVAIS, ETC.—NOMINATED BISHOP OF MEAUX—ASSEMBLY GENERAL—LETTERS TO DR. DIROIS AND DE RANCÉ—STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE GALLICAN CHURCH—AFFAIR OF THE RÉGALE—LOUIS XIV.'S DECLARATION—BOSSUET PREACHES BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY—THE FOUR ARTICLES—DE HARLAY—DECLARATION OF THE CLERGY OF FRANCE—CONFIRMED BY THE KING'S EDICT—INDIGNATION AT ROME—LETTERS TO DR. DIROIS—BOSSUET'S DEFENCE OF THE GALLICAN CHURCH.

FREE from his duties as preceptor, but unable to leave the Court by reason of his appointment as chief aumônier to the Dauphiness, Bossuet remained quietly awaiting God's Will, and labouring diligently at whatever his hand found to do on the Church's behalf. Whenever any important see fell vacant public opinion hastened to bestow it upon him. When the Archbishopric of Lyons was vacant, Bossuet wrote to Madame d'Albert:

"You must not be surprised if I say nothing about the various reports concerning the Archiepiscopate of Lyons. Whatever may be said, I feel in my own heart

that it is not intended, and that nothing will come of it; but I think it is more faithful to God not to dwell upon anything that concerns myself, except when necessary —'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'"[1] Lyons, Sens, and Beauvais respectively invited the King to give them the well-known orator as their Bishop, and both the Bishops of Châlons and Meaux endeavoured to obtain him as coadjutor. The latter prelate died while yet seeking to bring about this appointment (April 27, 1681), and the King immediately nominated Bossuet as his successor, adding the special compliment of himself sending Père de la Chaise to announce the nomination to M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, desiring him to publish it in the Assembly of Bishops then sitting at the Archevêché. In a letter to M. Dirois,[2] dated May 23rd, sending him the *Histoire Universelle*, Bossuet alludes to his appointment, by inviting the Doctor to come and see him some future day at Germigny, the country residence of the Bishop of Meaux; but the first direct mention of his return to the episcopal office (if it can be so called) is in a letter to de Rancé, Abbot of la Trappe, dated June 22, 1681, in which he says, "Your promise to pray that God will guide me in my episcopal functions is a great comfort to me, but you will not get off with that only. For the last ten years I have had it in my mind

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 122. [2] *Ibid.* vol. xxvi. p. 277.

that, if it should please God once again to call me to any office in His Church, I should do two things—first, go to spend some time actively with the late M. de Châlons, and secondly, spend some time in prayer with you. God has deprived me of the first help by the death of that worthy prelate, but I beg you not to deny me the second. . . . I am full of delight when I think of doing this, and if you agree, I will arrange my affairs accordingly, as soon as ever I hear from Rome."[1]

But Bossuet was not able to carry out his intentions. He was too weighty and powerful a man to be left out of the great struggle impending between the Pope and the Gallican Church; and he was nominated by the metropolitan assembly of Paris as their deputy to the Assembly General, even before he received his bulls, and he was immediately chosen to preach the opening sermon before the Assembly.

"I shall be deprived of the comfort I looked for," he writes (Sept. 1681) to de Rancé.[2] "The Assembly of Clergy is about to meet, and I am not only required to be a member, but to preach the opening sermon. . . . Anyhow, if I cannot come and pray with you, do you pray for me; the matter is important and worthy of your attention. You know what these Assemblies are, and the spirit which usually prevails in

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 278. [2] *Ibid.* p. 283.

them. I see indications which give me some small hope about this one; but I dare not trust to my hopes, and in truth they are mixed with not a little fear."

The whole position was difficult and complicated. Cardinal de Bausset says that "the Assembly of 1682 is the most memorable epoch of the Gallican Church's history."[1] That Church had always prided itself on its spirit of nationality, and, as it professed now, "its submission to the Papal See was subject to the canons given by God's Holy Spirit and consecrated by the whole world's respect, confirmed by the customs and institutions received throughout the kingdom."[2] But there came a time when the audacious leaders who always spring up in periods of crisis made use of the public excitement for their personal ends, and these men invoked the Pope's intervention in the affairs of their Church just as they invoked the army and gold of the King of Spain in their secular affairs. "It was thus," says Cardinal de Bausset, "that Ultramontane

[1] *Hist. de Bossuet*, vol. ii. p. 94.

[2] "Hinc apostolicæ potestatis usum moderandum per canones Spiritu Dei conditos et totius mundi reverentia consecratos: valere etiam regulas, mores et instituta a regno et Ecclesia Gallicana recepta. Patrumque terminos manere inconcussos; atque id pertinere ad amplitudinem Apostolicæ Sedis, ut statuta et consuetudines tantæ Sedis et Ecclesiarum consensione firmatæ, propriam stabilitatem obtineant."—*Cleri Gallicani de Ecclesiastica Potestate Declaratio*, *Œuvres*, vol. xxi.

views insinuated themselves among some members of the Clergy, and the ancient maxims of the royal independence were obscured by the bold sophistry of certain writers. But those who had been rather carried away than straying wilfully, returned naturally to the old doctrine of the Gallican Church, when the general excitement had somewhat cooled."[1]

The immediate reason which led Louis XIV. to convoke the Assembly of 1682 was in order to strengthen his hands in the contest he was carrying on with Pope Innocent XI. The Regalia, which was the moving cause of the contest, was in itself of comparatively little importance. It was a certain right by which the Kings of France took possession of the revenues of vacant sees, and disposed of the benefices pertaining to them until such time as the newly-appointed prelates had taken the oaths of fidelity, and had been registered in the Chambres des Comptes de Paris.

Certain sees in France claimed their exemption from this Regalia, and were permitted to assert their claim. But in February 1673 Louis XIV. put forth a *Déclaration* affirming the *droit de Régale* to be inalienable, and requiring all Bishops and Archbishops who had not taken the oaths to do so within two months. Almost all those prelates to whom this declaration

[1] *Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 205.

applied yielded at once, but the Bishops of Alet and Pamiers refused to take the oaths. The King nominated to benefices in their dioceses in consequence; they appealed to their Metropolitans, the Archbishops of Narbonne and Toulouse, who decided against them, and then the two Bishops appealed against this decision to the Holy See. "Instead of taking the part of a mediator, which would have been so suitable to his character as Head of the Church, Innocent XI. constituted himself supreme judge, and pronounced judgment in so absolute a manner, that Louis XIV., however disposed to be moderate, and however respectful to the Holy See, could not but be deeply offended at so extraordinary a proceeding."[1]

Three briefs were launched in rapid succession at the offending monarch, and the third (Dec. 29, 1679) was couched in such threatening terms, that Louis XIV. was constrained to take measures to ensure respect for his crown and peace for his kingdom. The Assembly of Clergy was sitting at Saint-Germain-en-Laye when this brief was published in France, and they immediately addressed a letter to the King, expressing their "extreme displeasure" at the Pope's utterances, and their belief that these were calculated to "injure the cause of religion and the glory of the Holy See rather than to produce any good effects."[2]

[1] CARD. DE BAUSSET, *Hist.* vol. ii. p. 114. [2] July 10, 1680.

On the 1st January 1681, however, Innocent XI. addressed a brief to the Chapter of Pamiers, in direct violation of all past concordats, excommunicating every one who had submitted to the Metropolitan's decision, and practically defying the Gallican Church as a National Church. The Assembly of Clergy, led by the Archbishop of Rheims, thereupon petitioned the King to call the Bishops of France together, either as a National Council, or an Assembly General of all the Clergy of the Kingdom. This *procès-verbal* bears Bossuet's signature, May 7, 1681, five days after his nomination to the See of Meaux. The Assembly General was convoked, and opened Nov. 9, 1681, Bossuet preaching in the Church of the Grands Augustins, as desired.

"I preached the Assembly sermon yesterday," he wrote to M. Dirois[1] (Nov. 10, 1681), "and I should have preached it with equal confidence in Rome as at Paris, for I believe that truth may be boldly spoken everywhere, so long as it is tempered with discretion and inspired by love." His text was from Numbers xxiv. 5, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel:"[2]—Unity the subject. Bossuet wrote concerning the sermon to the Cardinal d'Estrées, to whom he sent it, as follows:—

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 288.

[2] Vol. xi. p. 588.

"PARIS, *December* 1, 1681.

". . . It was indispensably necessary that I should speak of the liberties of the Gallican Church. Your Eminence will at once see what that involved;—and I set two points before myself, one, to do this without any loss to the true greatness of the Holy See;—the other, to explain those liberties from a Bishop's point of view, not a magistrate's. I have no more to say,—your Eminence will judge whether I have kept the conditions. I may say generally that the authority of the Holy See was duly revered by all the audience. I took pains to keep up its dignity as much as I could; and while setting forth the ancient doctrine of France with all possible respect, I strove equally to put a limit on those who abuse it, as to set it forth itself.

"Such was my intention—your Eminence will judge as to how far I succeeded. . . . The tender ears of the Romans have to be considered, and I have done so with all my heart. There are three points which may wound them: the independence of the temporality of kings, episcopal jurisdiction as held direct from Jesus Christ, and the authority of Councils. You know that these are questions which we treat very straightforwardly in France, and I have striven so to speak, as neither to betray the doctrine of the Gallican Church, or to offend the dignity of Rome. This is as much as

can be required of a French Bishop, when constrained by circumstances to deal with these questions. In a word, I have spoken plainly,—for that is a duty everywhere, above all in the pulpit; but I have spoken respectfully, and that—God is my witness—with a good intention. Your Eminence will believe this, and I hope that you will feel the truth of my position, and study it so as to be prepared to shut the mouth of those who may attack me. . . .

"One word as to the temporalities of kings. It appears to me that nothing can be more offensive than the Ultramontane opinion, or more calculated to raise a great obstacle in the way of the conversion of heretic or infidel kings. What sovereign power would subject itself to a master able to deprive him of his kingdom by a decree?"[1]

Bossuet read his sermon before preaching it to the Archbishops of Paris and Rheims, who entirely concurred in all that it expressed;—the King also read it attentively, expressed his satisfaction, and begged that it might be printed, a request repeated by the Assembly; and accordingly, early in January 1682, the sermon was published.

The question of the Régale was arranged by mutual concession, and a letter drawn up by Bossuet was sent from the Assembly to the Pope, February 3,

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 290.

1682,—most moderate and respectful, explaining a discussion "the precise nature and object of which," Cardinal de Bausset says, "it would appear that Innocent XI. knew but little." Evidently, from a letter Bossuet wrote to M. Dirois, February 6, 1682,[1] he did not anticipate any further ill will from Rome; and he, as well as the Gallican Church generally, were much surprised and rather indignant, when, after waiting three days after receiving the letter before he deigned to open it, and three months before he answered it, the Pope wrote back a scolding, imperious letter, as if he were addressing a collection of rebellious schoolboys; desiring them to efface all traces of their letter, as, should the document be preserved, it would cast an everlasting opprobrium over the Clergy of France. He proceeded to annul and reverse everything which the Assembly had done, or might do!

The Assembly was not to be dealt with thus. "It was evident," says Cardinal de Bausset, "that the authority attributed to himself by the Pope, and the judgment which he pronounced in such a matter, were incompatible with the principles accepted in France from time immemorial, and always recognised by the Holy See itself."[2]

The Assembly had no intention of leaving the validity of its deliberations to depend upon the Pope's

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 299. [2] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 150.

consent, and the edict of January 1682 as to the Régale was already working well. But it was necessary that the Assembly should assert itself and justify its proceedings before the whole Gallican Church which it represented. Therefore Bossuet was directed to address a letter in the name of the Assembly to all the Bishops and Ecclesiastics in the kingdom, which he accordingly did, in language so dignified and so stringent, that the Pope, or, as Bossuet supposes (for he says the Pope's Council must have studiously concealed the truth from his Holiness), his advisers, must have winced as they read it.[1] This letter was not, however, sent all over France, as was intended, and the Assembly broke up without it having been given to the public.

It was in the interval between the edict and the Pope's brief that the famous *Quatre Articles* had been proclaimed. The Abbé le Dieu says, that in January 1700, during a journey to Meaux, he asked Bossuet who had originated the idea of this Declaration, and the Bishop replied that it was Colbert, then Secretary of State.[2] Bossuet and the Bishop of Tournai (de Choiseul Praslin) were appointed to draw up these Resolutions. The latter was the senior Bishop, and as such took the lead; but they did not altogether agree. Both rejected the Infallibility of the Pope, but

[1] Vol. xxi. [2] *Mémoires*, LE DIEU, vol. i. p. 8.

Bossuet differed from his colleague as to the "indefectibility" of the Holy See. This led to the retirement of the Bishop of Tournai, and Bossuet alone drew up the Declaration. He had some difficulties to contend with among his brother Bishops, several of whom thought him disposed to yield too much to the overweening claims of Rome. Among these was Archbishop de Harlay. Some historians look upon de Harlay's line throughout the Assembly as a matter solely of policy, not religion. Sainte Beuve says, that years before he had taken as his motto "*le Roi avant tout*,"—"the Catholic and the Christian yielded to the subject—God and the Pope took the second place." [1] There can be no doubt that the Archbishop was—though most captivating, handsome, talented, and brilliant—a thoroughly worldly, self-interested, profligate man.

There were many disputes over the drawing up of the Articles. Bossuet first drew up the preamble, which was unanimously accepted. He then submitted to the Commission four different sets of articles after the manner of the Ancient Councils; and of these the Commission adopted that one which has since been so celebrated under the title of the Four Articles of the Clergy of France. But this form was accepted contrary to the opinion of the Archbishop of Paris, who

[1] *N. Lundis*, vol. v. p. 165.

would not have allowed any mention of the Pope's primacy or superiority.[1]

No trace remains of the three rejected projects; Cardinal de Bausset says that in the Declaration adopted we have the clearest possible characteristics of Bossuet's own mind and position, "checking alike those who are wanting in respect for the legitimate authority of the Holy See, and those who would exaggerate it to a degree which is incompatible with the maxims of religion, and the principles of that submission which is due to the secular power."[2]

As a matter alike of history and theology, this Declaration is important. It is entitled:

*Declaration of the Clergy of France concerning Ecclesiastical Power.*

*March* 19, 1682.

CERTAIN persons having attempted to overthrow the decrees of the Gallican Church, its liberties which our ancestors so zealously upheld, and its foundations, resting on the holy canons and the traditions of the Fathers: Certain others under pretext of these liberties, daring to deprive the primacy of S. Peter, and his successors the Pontiffs of Rome divinely appointed, of that obedience which is due to them

[1] Abbé le Dieu. [2] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 171.

from all Christians, and the Apostolic See of that majesty which is so venerable in the eyes of all nations for the preservation of faith and the unity of the Church: Heretics meanwhile, leaving nothing undone to put this power, which maintains the peace of the Church, in a light insupportable to kings and people, thereby separating simple souls from the Communion of the Church and of Jesus Christ: With the aim of remedying these evils, we, the Archbishops and Bishops assembled at Paris by order of the King, with other deputies representing the Gallican Church, have judged it fitting, after mature deliberation, to confirm and declare:

I.

That S. Peter and his successors, Vicars of Jesus Christ, and the whole Church herself, have only received power of God in things spiritual, and pertaining to eternal salvation, not in things civil or temporal, the Lord Himself having said, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and also "Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" as also firmly declareth the Apostle, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God: whosoever therefore resisteth the power,

resisteth the ordinance of God." Therefore kings and princes are in nowise subjected by God's appointment to any ecclesiastical power in temporal things; neither can the authority of the Keys of the Church directly or indirectly depose them, or their subjects be dispensed from the obedience and fidelity of their oaths to the same: and this doctrine we affirm to be necessary for the maintenance of public peace, no less profitable to the Church than to the State, and to be everywhere and every way observed as agreeable to the Word of God, to the tradition of the Fathers, and the example of the Saints.

II.

That the full powers held by the Holy Apostolic See and the successors of S. Peter, as Vicars of Christ, in spiritual things, are the same as the decrees of the holy Œcumenical Council of Constance, put forth in its IV. and V. Sessions, which were approved by the Holy Apostolic See, confirmed by the practice of all the Church and of the Roman Pontiffs, and religiously observed at all times by the Gallican Church; that they abide in full force, and that the Gallican Church does not uphold those who would impugn their authority, or say that they were only adopted by the Council at a time of schism.

III.

That thus the use of the Apostolic power is to be moderated according to the canons inspired of God's Holy Spirit, and consecrated by the whole world's reverence: so that the rules, uses, and institutions generally received in the kingdom and the Gallican Church be maintained, and the boundaries fixed by our fathers remain unaltered: inasmuch as it pertains to the dignity of the Holy Apostolic See that the laws and customs confirmed by the consent of that See and of the Churches should be established firmly.

IV.

And that although the Pope has a chief voice in matters of faith, and that his decrees concern all Churches, nevertheless his judgment is not unalterable, except with the consent of the Church.

We send these maxims received of our Fathers to all the Churches of France, and to the Bishops who preside over them, as commissioned by the Holy Ghost, in order that we may all decree and say the same thing, and hold the like doctrine in the like sense.

This Declaration was signed by the thirty-four Archbishops and Bishops, and the thirty-four deputies

who formed the Assembly, on March 19, 1681. On the 20th the Commissioners, headed by the Archbishop of Rheims, presented it to the King at Saint-Germain, and on the 23rd it was formally registered by the Parliament.

Four days later this Declaration was confirmed by the King's edict. "The Declaration of the Assembly of 1682 did not and could not receive any opposition in France," Cardinal de Bausset writes. "It did but confirm a doctrine which at all times had been precious to the University and the Faculty of Theology of Paris; and by a singular coincidence, that particular Religious Order which was supposed habitually to look most favourably upon the Ultramontane pretensions, was now eagerly engaged in maintaining the rights of the Gallican Clergy."[1]

Bossuet expected a certain opposition from Rome; —yet he genuinely believed that the moderation scrupulously observed in the tone of the Four Articles put them beyond censure, and "that as it was impossible to condemn them, Rome would have the tact not to appear offended." He even hoped "that Rome would feel indebted to the Gallican Clergy for all the consideration and courtesy they had shown her."[2]

[1] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 188.

[2] *Ibid.* See also a letter from Bossuet to M. Dirois, July 13, 1682, *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 302.

But these hopes were soon overthrown. A letter to M. Dirois puts Bossuet's view on the subject in a clear light:—

"VERSAILLES, *October* 28, 1682.

"I have just returned from a long journey in Normandy, and my first act, even before reaching Paris, as I hope to do this evening, is to answer your last letter.

"It conveys a description of the existing state of things in the Court of Rome which makes me tremble. What, is Bellarmine to be substituted for everything else, and to absorb in himself all tradition! What will happen to us if it comes to this, and if the Pope is going to condemn whatever this author condemns? Hitherto no one has dared to do this;—no one has dared to make such an attack on the Council of Constance, or the Popes who approved it. What are we to say to heretics who quote against us this Council and its decrees, which were repeated at Bâle with the express approbation of Eugenius IV., and all the other confirmation given by Rome? If Eugenius IV. was right in formally approving these decrees, how can they be impugned? and if he was wrong, what of his pretended infallibility? . . . God forbid! Do not stop your efforts to show what is involved, and what is being brought upon us all. . . . I have thought much over what you say, that Rome, so far from being

softened by what we have granted her, takes it as an acknowledgment of her rights, and makes use of it for further advances. I have been quite alive to that, but I can only say that when Bishops speak they must think of future as well as of present times, and their strength lies in speaking the truth as it honestly appears to them.

"I cannot quite see how you can believe that the 4th Article of our Declaration can fall in with the Ultramontane doctrine. We had no such intention, although on the other hand we saw plainly that whatever may be speculatively said, practically one must always fall back on reserving all final and irrevocable decision to the consent of the Universal Church, in which alone we express our faith in the Creed. I cannot suppose that a Pope who is so zealous for the conversion of heretics, and the reunion of schismatics, will desire to put an eternal obstacle in the way of both by such a decision as that with which we are threatened.[1] May God avert this blow; and if the Court of Rome

[1] Arnauld says, speaking of some of the supporters of Ultramontane principles: "Il pretend que Jésus Christ ayant été roi de toute la terre, et le pape étant son vicaire, il a aussi une souveraine puissance sur toute la terre, et par conséquent sur tous les souverains. Je plains le Saint Siége d'avoir de tels défenseurs; et c'est un terrible jugement de Dieu sur l'Église, si Rome prend cette voie de se défendre contre les évêques de France."—Quoted in Introduction by Abbé Guettée to LE DIEU'S *Mémoires*, p. xcviii.

has the least prudence it will not expose itself to such a difficulty. The infallibility of the Pope ends by being practically only that of the Church."

"One would hardly credit, but for this letter," writes Cardinal de Bausset, "that Rome could have been so blind as to revive her old pretensions concerning the sovereignty of kings, instead of letting them lie buried in eternal oblivion. The mere fact of such an idea arising suffices to justify the wisdom and necessity of the Declaration." He alludes to the P.S. of Bossuet's letter,—

"I was forgetting one of the chief Articles, that on the independence of royal temporalities. To condemn this Article is all that is wanted for complete destruction! What hope can there be of ever winning back the Northern princes, or of converting infidel kings, if they cannot become Catholic without giving themselves a master who can dispossess them at his will? Nevertheless I see by your last letter, as well as others, that this is the point on which Rome is most excited. . . . Everything will be lost by such arrogance;—may God put a check on these excesses. It is not by such means as these that the authority of the Holy See will be established. No one wishes to see it great and exalted more than myself,—it was never so really great as under S. Leo, S. Gregory, and others,

who never dreamt of such domination. . . . Truth is on our side. God is powerful, and we must hope against hope, certain that He will not let it be extinguished in His Church." [1]

Writing to de Rancé, October 30, 1682, Bossuet says: "Church affairs are thriving badly: the Pope openly threatens us with crushing condemnation, and, it is said, with new formulas. Well meant ignorance is a grievous calamity in high places! Let us mourn and pray." [2]

Matters quieted down at Rome, and though Innocent XI. testified his animus by the encouragement and rewards given to many petty opponents of the Gallican Church, there were no important steps of offence taken, beyond the Pope's refusal of his bulls to those ecclesiastics who had taken part in the Assembly of 1682, and who had subsequently been nominated to bishoprics by the King. This was in direct contravention to the Concordat of Francis I. and Leo X., and Louis XIV. retaliated by refusing to allow those ecclesiastics to whom the Pope was willing to concede his bulls to receive them! This state of things lasted through the pontificates of Innocent XI. and Alexander VIII., peace not being established between France and the Court of Rome until Pope Innocent XII.'s time, although all other matters, dis-

[1] Vol. xxvi. p. 306. [2] *Ibid.* p. 313.

pensations, etc., were asked and granted as usual; but meanwhile fully one-third of the Gallican Bishops were not canonically instituted. A fresh bone of contention, in the question of franchise, arose between Louis XIV. and Innocent XI. in 1687-8.

Meanwhile Bossuet began to write his great work, "Gallia Orthodoxa sive Vindiciæ Scholæ Parisiensis totiusque Cleri Gallicani, adversus nonnullos."[1] The first version was finished in 1685, but not published, as Louis XIV. was anxious rather to conciliate than irritate the Court of Rome. Fresh attacks upon the Declaration poured forth, but were left unnoticed, until one more than ordinarily virulent in abuse, and excessive in Ultramontane tendency, published by the Archbishop of Valentia, led Bossuet to address the King on the necessity of a reply.[2] Parliament forbade the Archbishop's book to be sold, December 1695; the Pope was requested to give satisfaction to the wounded honour of France, for the offending book was dedicated to him, and thereby publicly claimed his sanction; but the most effectual step taken was that Bossuet resumed his "Defence," re-writing great part of it. He did not, however, finally complete it until the year 1700; but it was not even then published. Bossuet allowed the Cardinal de Noailles and the Abbé Fleury to have copies of his earliest manu-

[1] *Œuvres*, vols. xxi. xxii. [2] Vol. xxii. p. 617.

script, and at the death of the latter (in 1723) his copy was deposited in the King's Library by the Fleury who was then preceptor to the King, Louis XV., and later Prime Minister. It was Bossuet's nephew, the Bishop of Troyes, who at length, in 1735, printed the great *Défense* for the first time, from the last manuscript which his uncle had revised and corrected so short a time before his death. A French translation, made by M. de Roi, an Oratorian, was published at the same time. Cardinal de Bausset, after much research, found the latest MS. in 1812, which had undergone various adventures during the Revolution. It was bound with the Condé arms, and with it the presentation letter of the Abbé Bossuet, who had sent it to Louis XIV. It bears many annotations and corrections in Bossuet's own handwriting, and is undoubtedly the genuine version of the book as he left it.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER VI.

*Cleri Gallicani de Ecclesiasticæ Potestate Declaratio die Martii* 1682.

Ecclesiæ Gallicanæ decreta et libertates a majoribus nostris tanto studio propugnatas, earumque fundamenta sacris canonibus et Patrum traditione nixa multi diruere moliuntur; nec desunt qui earum obtentu primatum beati Petri, ejusque successorum Romanorum Pontificum a Christo institutum, iisque debitam ab omnibus christianis obedientiam, Sedisque apostolicæ, in quæ fides prædicatur, et unitas servatur Ecclesiæ, reverendam omni-

bus gentibus majestatem imminuere non vereantur. Hæretici quoque nihil prætermittunt, quo eam postestatem qua pax Ecclesiæ continetur, invidiosam et gravem regibus et populis ostentent, iisque fraudibus simplices animas ab Ecclesiæ matris, Christique adeo communione dissocient. Quæ ut incommoda propulsemus, Nos Archiepiscopi et Episcopi Parisiis mandato regio congregati, Ecclesiam Gallicanam repræsentantes una cum cæteris ecclesiasticis viris nobiscum deputatis, diligenti tractatu habito, hæc sancienda et declaranda esse duximus.

I.

Primum: beato Petro ejusque successoribus Christi vicariis ipsique Ecclesiæ rerum spiritualium et ad æternam salutem pertinentium, non autem, civilium ac temporalium a Deo traditam potestatem, dicente Domino, "Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo:" et iterum: "Reddite ergo quæ sunt Cæsaris Cæsari, et quæ sunt Dei Deo:" ac proinde stare apostolicum illud: "Omnis anima potestatibus sublimioribus subdita sit: non est enim potestas nisi a Deo: quæ autem sunt, a Deo ordinatæ sunt. Itaque qui postestati resistit, Dei ordinationi resistit." Reges ergo et principes in temporalibus nulli ecclesiasticæ potestati Dei ordinatione subjici, neque auctoritate clavium Ecclesiæ, directe vel indirecte deponi, aut illorum subditos eximi a fide atque obedientia, ac præstito fidelitatis sacramento solvi posse, eamque sententiam publicæ tranquillitati necessariam, nec minus Ecclesiæ quam imperio utilem, ut verbo Dei, Patrum traditioni et sanctorum exemplis consonam omnium retinendam.

II.

Sic autem in esse apostolicæ Sedi ac Petri successoribus Christi vicariis rerum spiritualium plenam potestatem, ut simul valeant atque immota consistant sanctæ œcumenicæ Synodi Constantiensis a Sede apostolica comprobata, ipsoque Romanorum Pontificum ac totius Ecclesiæ usu confirmata, atque ab Ecclesia Gallicana perpetua religione custodita decreta de auctoritate conciliarum generalium, quæ sessione quarta et quinta continentur,

nec probari a Gallicana Ecclesia qui eorum decretorum, quasi dubiæ sint auctoritatis ac minus approbata, robur infringant, aut ad solum schismatis tempus Concilii dicta detorqueant.

III.

Hinc apostolicæ potestatis usum moderandum per canones Spiritu Dei conditos et totius mundi reverentia consecratos: valere etiam regulas, mores et instituta a regno et Ecclesia Gallicana recepta, Patrumque terminos manere inconcussos; atque id pertinere ad amplitudinem apostolicæ Sedis, ut statuta et consuetudines tantæ Sedis et Ecclesiarum consensione firmatæ, propriam stabilitatem obtineant.

IV.

In fidei quoque quæstionibus præcipuas summi Pontificis esse partes, ejusque decreta ad omnes et singulas Ecclesias pertinere, nec tamen irreformabile esse judicium, nisi Ecclesiæ consensus accesserit.

Quæ accepta a Patribus ad omnes Ecclesiæ Gallicanus atque episcopos iis Spiritu Sancto auctore præsidentes, mittenda decrevimus; ut idipsum dicamus omnes, simusque in eodem sensu et in eadem sententia.

Then follow the signatures, among which comes Jacobus Benignus, Episcopus Meldensis.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BOSSUET AT MEAUX.

BOSSUET'S INSTALLATION AT MEAUX—FIRST SERMON IN THE CATHEDRAL—RETREAT AT LA TRAPPE—LETTER ON THE ADORATION OF THE CROSS—THE PALACE AT MEAUX—BOSSUET'S HOUSEHOLD—CONTRAST OF THAT OF HIS SUCCESSOR DE BISSY—HIS HABIT OF NIGHT WORK—DIOCESAN WORK—OFFICES—MANNER OF PERFORMING CEREMONIES—PREPARATION FOR PREACHING—VISITATIONS—MISSIONS—CONFERENCES—SYNODS—CATECHISMS—HOSPITALS, RELIGIOUS HOUSES—IRREGULARITIES OF THE ABBEY OF JOUARRE REFORMED—LETTERS TO THE ABBESS—BOSSUET'S DISLIKE OF PARTY SPIRIT—HIS LITERARY FRIENDS—FÉNELON—CALVINISTS—INTERVIEW WITH THE CAPETS—TRAITÉ DE LA COMMUNION SOUS LES DEUX ÉSPECES, AND OTHER CONTROVERSIAL WRITINGS—MODERATION IN DEALING WITH PROTESTANTS—FUNERAL ORATION OF THE QUEEN MARIE THÉRÈSE—HER CHARACTER—FUNERAL ORATION OF THE PRINCESS PALATINE—OF CHANCELLOR LE TELLIER—CHARACTER OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS—THE GREAT CONDÉ—HIS DEATH—FUNERAL ORATION.

ALTHOUGH titular Bishop of Meaux at the time when he preached the opening sermon of the Assembly, Bossuet was unable to go thither during the busy and anxious session which ensued;—a session in which his vigorous will and clear intellect were too valuable to be spared even for the sake of

his new Diocese, until during a suspended sitting in the month of February 1682, he managed to go to Meaux for a few days, accompanied by the Bishop of Tournai, in order to be installed. Accordingly on Quinquagesima, February 8, 1682, the ceremony of installation took place, in the presence of the Archbishop of Rheims, and the Bishops of Tournai, la Rochelle and Luçon. Bossuet then went to Germigny, the country house of the Bishops of Meaux, for a couple of days' rest, returning to the town for the services of Ash-Wednesday, when he officiated at the solemn service of giving ashes, and preached for the first time in his cathedral.[1] This was all he could do. His presence was absolutely required in the Assembly, and he returned to Paris immediately. But as soon as the Assembly dispersed, Bossuet determined that nothing should come between him and the episcopal duties of which he took so high a view, and before giving himself up to them, he carried out the hitherto postponed plan of a retreat at la Trappe. This was only one of eight several visits which, during the remainder of his life, Bossuet paid to that ascetic

[1] The actual pulpit in the Cathedral of Meaux is composed of the panels of that from which Bossuet preached on this occasion, and so many subsequently. One panel bears the date 1621. It is a very simple, unadorned pulpit, less roomy than one commonly finds the pulpits of that period, and is placed against the first pillar in the nave, at the angle of the south transept.

community. He found the intercourse of his friend de Rancé, and the rigid discipline of the house, very bracing and helpful to him in his more distracted unresting career, and used to say that he would rather be there then anywhere else out of his own diocese. When staying at la Trappe, Bossuet always assisted at all the religious exercises of the Community, rising with the earliest for Matins, and sharing their meals, or rather their severe abstinence. It was not until his last visit there, when he was seventy-nine, that he consented to exceed the rule by drinking a little wine. There was something in the silence and absolute stillness of the place which soothed the busy man of letters. Each day before Vespers he and the Abbot used to walk together in the surrounding woods, and talk of the matters nearest both their hearts, and these seasons were the greatest happiness de Rancé knew, "des veritable graces de la Providence." His attachment to his early college friend only ended with his life. In August 1699, the Abbot was thought to be dying, and his one wish was for Bossuet. "I should die content," he said to the Abbé de Saint André, afterwards Grand-Vicaire of Meaux, "if I could see him once more and receive his dear blessing."[1]

[1] De Rancé died October 27, 1700, about three years and a half before his friend. The Abbé Le Dieu records the reception of the tidings by Bossuet: "De la nouvelle de la mort de M.

Bossuet took a great interest in bringing out a work of de Rancé's on the Monastic Life, himself correcting proofs and taking all the necessary trouble. This book led to a lively discussion between the Abbot of la Trappe and the learned Benedictine Mabillon, who thought that de Rancé cast a slight on the literary pursuits of his own Order. It was during one of Bossuet's visits to la Trappe that he was led to write and publish a letter on the Adoration of the Cross, in consequence of meeting there a Frenchman who had been serving the Prince of Orange, and had been misled into the errors of Calvinism. This man was brought back to the Church by reading some of Bossuet's works, and finding him at la Trappe, Frère Armand, as he was called, desired to have the benefit of his personal instructions. The result was this letter, which Bossuet wrote after they had parted, in

Armand Jean Bouthiller de Rancé, ancien Abbé de la Trappe, son compagnon de licence. Cet Abbé mourut dans son abbaye, d'une fluxion de poitrine, et au bout de treize jours de maladie, ayant recu les sacremens de l'Eglise avec une connaissance parfaite, et une piété exemplaire, car quoiqu'il eût la voix fort baissée il ne laissa pas alors d'exhorter ses religieux à conserver l'union entre eux, leur donnant lui-même jusqu'au dernier soupir tous les examples de paix, d'humilité, de charité et de confiance. M. de Meaux a témoigné une grande douleur de cette mort, comme de la perte du meilleur ami qu'il eût au monde. Il est vrai que cet illustre Abbé l'aimoit tendrement, et qu'il a conservé pour lui dans tous les états de sa vie une estime singulière."—Le Dieu, vol. ii. p. 160.

order that Protestants generally might understand what is really meant by the "adoration" of the Cross, to which some of them objected as idolatry. In one passage he refers to the various signs of respect given to the Holy Scriptures by the Protestants themselves —the "kissing the book," in taking a solemn oath, which, as he says, is no reverence to the paper and the ink, but to the eternal truth represented therein— yet no one calls this idolatry? "What is the Cross, but the summary of the Gospel, the Gospel itself comprised in a single symbol? and why not kiss it, or bow before it as well as before a book? 'I know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' S. Paul says, and the Cross sums up this lesson and sets it before us as in a single word."[1] He goes through the various Scriptural uses of the word adoration or worship, as distinct from that adoration which is due to God Alone, bringing out in forcible language that whatever is good or lovely or worthy of praise is so only in as far as it is in Him, to Him, and by Him.

It was in June 1682 that Bossuet took up his real residence at Meaux, and was at length able to shape his manner of life according to what he considered the claims of his office. The Episcopal Palace is a massive irregular building, closely adjoining the Cathedral, which stands on a little eminence in the

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 279.

centre of the roughly paved town. An old cloister connects the two, entering the spacious Court of the Evêché. There is nothing however very remarkable about the Palace, nor can it be decided now, with any certainty,—so says Monsiegneur Allou, the present venerable Bishop of Meaux—which[1] apartments were inhabited by his great predecessor. The garden alone preserves traces of Bossuet. A little *pavillon*, containing two small rooms panelled in oak, is called his study, and he is supposed to have often retired there to work, on which occasions—so the tradition of the place says—he was to be considered as "not at home," and denied to his numerous visitors. Behind this there is an allée of yew trees, planted by Mgr. de Ligny, his predecessor, where Bossuet used to walk and meditate. The garden is said to have been laid out by Le Nôtre, but there is nothing very remarkable about it. The details of Bossuet's household were extremely simple;—as we saw when living at Court. His table was too plain to suit his Parisian friends, and at Meaux he lived frugally[2] and with little variety.

[1] *Notice de la Cathédrale de Meaux*, p. 77.

[2] This manner of living was apparently not continued by Bossuet's successor, de Bissy, judging by the Abbé Le Dieu's frequent records of "*bonne et belle chère*," "*tout ce qu'il y avoit de plus delicat*," "son bon vin Champagne," etc. He tells us too that de Bissy was the exact reverse of his predecessor, in that it was "his style to go himself into all minutiæ of expenditure;

He paid but little attention himself to his ménage, —who can wonder, considering the weighty matters, theological, intellectual and political, which were continually occupying him, and it seems to have been deficient in order and regularity. Bossuet gave up the control of household expenses with an over-blind

his great talent is for the science of details; and so he knows exactly what is spent day by day in his house—down to the number of glasses of wine, whether at table or in the offices."—Vol. iv. p. 33. We ought to bear in mind that whatever may be the faults of our present day in the way of self-indulgence, good eating and drinking were unmistakeably the weakness of that period. Louis XIV. ate enormously, though he was never immoderate in drinking. We are told that four plates of various soups, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a large plateful of salad, mutton *au jus et à l'ail*, two large slices of ham, a plateful of pastry, and then fruit and confitures, was an ordinary dinner for him. In the medical journal of the King's health kept by his physicians, we find a specimen of his food when being "*fatigué et abattu*" he was obliged to "*manger gras*" on a Friday. "He was content ONLY to have *des croutes*, a potage aux pigeons, and three roasted chickens, and the next day the same, *les croutes*, a *potage* with a fowl, and three roast chickens, of which, as on Friday, he ate four wings, all the breasts and a leg."—*Journal de la Santé de Roi Louis XIV.*, par Vallot, d'Aquin et Fagon.

M. de Bissy furnished the palace at Meaux much better than Bossuet had ever done. "Les meubles sont plus convenables et plus propres que ceux de feu M. de Meaux, parceque les siéges et les fauteuils y sont partout en grand nombre, sont tous à la mode, ce qui fait un bel ornement dans les chambres avec des bureaux et des commodes qu'on appelle, aussi partout, qui parent beaucoup: il dit qu'il n'y en à que pour 24,000 francs."—LE DIEU, vol. iii. p. 367.

confidence to his house-steward,[1] and the consequence was his money was not well managed, and towards the end of his life he was in some amount of difficulty, and blamed himself for his negligence. It was not until he found it troublesome to get money for his charities from this steward, that Bossuet roused himself to institute a reform in the state of things, which had become very bad by that time. He was always gentle, courteous and dignified among those who surrounded him, and all his servants and dependants were warmly attached to him. His perceptions were quick, and his insight into character keen. He saw through people's motives, but he was indulgent in judging them, and used great tact in dealing with the faults of others, and moreover he had a very royal gift of remembering and acknowledging any kindness or attention shown to himself. "You fancy that I think of nothing but my books," he used to say, "but I have my eyes open for everybody."

Some of his personal habits were peculiar. From the time he left the Court, Bossuet made it a habit to get up during the night for devotion and study. He always kept a lamp burning in his room for this purpose, even

[1] The Abbé Le Dieu describes the dismissal of a house-steward, who had been a nuisance to Bossuet for sixteen years, and who was at last only got rid of by the active interference of the Bishop's nephew, the Abbé Bossuet.—*Journal*, i. p. 39.

when travelling; and after a few hours' sleep on first going to bed, he used to get up, alike in summer and winter, however sharp the cold might be. Two dressing gowns, and a sort of bag made of bearskin, into which he used to get and draw round his waist, met this difficulty; and thus armed, the Bishop of Meaux used to say Matins and Lauds amid the stillness of night, and that done, he went to his literary work. Everything was put ready over-night, and so he betook himself to his books and papers for as long a time as his brain worked clearly and vigorously. When he began to feel that exhausted, he used to lie down again, and would fall asleep at once. This continued to be his daily custom until towards the close of his life, Bossuet's physicians insisted on his giving up the work, and thenceforth he went back to bed after he had finished his devotions. These active habits account in some measure for the enormous quantity of work he was able to get through; moreover, he never lost a moment voluntarily, and he used to excuse himself from all the ordinary visits and formalities which so greatly hinder a busy man. Time was not, however, retrenched from prayer. His family was always gathered together for household prayer, and he was diligent in saying Office, though he did not make it a rule to attend all the Cathedral offices, except on Saturdays, when he generally went

to Vespers, and he was always there on Sundays, both at High Mass, Vespers, and Sermon. The Abbé Le Dieu, in the very minute Journal which he kept of the latter years of Bossuet's Episcopate, has continued entries, such as—

"Sat., Dec. 18, 1700.—A numerous Ordination. The Bishop spent the afternoon at the Seminary exhorting the Ordinands.

"19th.—The Bishop said Mass in his Chapel, and later assisted at the Sermon in Cathedral, and then worked all day at the *Politique*.

"21st.—Assisted at Sermon in Cathedral, saying Mass after it.

"22nd and 23rd.—The same.

"24th.—The Bishop worked all the morning, and said Mass at 11 o'clock. After dinner assisted pontifically at the first Vespers of Christmas. He did not go to Matins, but sang the midnight Mass, and said the Mass of daybreak, as also the Christmas High Mass, assisting at the Sermon, and saying second Vespers."[1]

Such is the continued record when Bossuet was an old man, and sometimes hindered by cold or other derangements. Nothing was of sufficient importance to keep him away from Meaux at any of the great festivals. His duties as Chaplain to the Dauphiness,

[1] Vol. ii. p. 167, etc.

or whatever else claimed him—all was deputed to some one else, while the Bishop himself duly appeared in his Cathedral and officiated pontifically. Testimony to this faithfulness was given after Bossuet's death in a somewhat unworthy manner by the Chapter, who, going to law with his heir, the Abbé Bossuet (certainly a most unsatisfactory and grasping person, so it may not have been altogether the Chapter that was to blame), concerning dilapidations, demanded 5000 francs on account of the best vestments, which had received so much wear in consequence of the late Bishop's officiating so often himself!

He was extremely particular about all trifling details in ritual—as to their reverent performance and correctness that is. The Abbé Le Dieu, his Chaplain, says that nothing escaped him, and the Bishop would call him to account for having forgotten some saint of whom memorial ought to be made, or the like. But he disliked anything like affectation or minute pedantry, and his own manner of officiating was flowing and rapid. "Ceremonies should be performed with dignity, but briskly," he used to say. "One must not bore the people."[1]

On that Ash-Wednesday when Bossuet preached for the first time to his people, he announced his in-

[1] *Mémoires de l'Abbé Le Dieu*, vol. i. p. 29.

tention of always preaching himself at the great festivals, and he fulfilled his promise up to the time of his last illness. But comparatively few of his sermons after he became Bishop of Meaux were written —a few notes sufficed; his real preparation was of another kind. One day the Abbés Fleury and Le Dieu went into his study just before the Bishop was going to preach, and they found him on his knees, bare-headed, and the Bible in his hand, absorbed in meditation on the subject he was about to handle.[1]

He was also extremely particular about his Visitation duties, and, although probably one of the busiest and most engaged of French Bishops, he was almost

[1] Le Dieu gives the following account of Bossuet's habitual mode of preparation for preaching: "He used to write down anyhow his plan, his text, and his proofs, either in French or Latin, without studying words, expressions, or figures. I have heard him say a hundred times that otherwise his action would be languid and his words feeble. Having prepared this rough material, he used to make a profound meditation upon it in the morning before preaching, generally writing nothing more, to avoid distraction—for his imagination worked far more rapidly than his hand. But his thoughts were in thorough control, and he used to fix in his mind even the expressions he intended to use. Then, in the afternoon, he would recollect himself, go over his sermon in his head, reading it there as if it were on paper, changing and altering as if he were using a pen. And then at last, when in the pulpit, he used to follow the impression made on his hearers, and often he would suddenly put aside the line he had intended to take, and pursue the course of feeling which he saw was aroused among them."—Vol. i. p. 111.

unrivalled in this respect. He trusted to no one but himself such inquiries and investigations as belonged by rights to him, and his great object was that the whole diocese should look to him and feel him as a real Father. He confirmed regularly, giving instructions to the persons brought to him for confirmation, and taking pains to fix the ceremony at times when the people were most free to attend it—always carefully arranging these in order that the young people confirmed might start homewards in good time.[1] His extreme recollection and devotion on such occasions made a great impression on the bystanders. One of the things he disliked most on a Visitation tour was the duty of examining into building or other accounts, but it was not the less carefully fulfilled.

Missions had been a strong point with him, as we have seen, since the days when he was Archdeacon of Metz, and he repeatedly took his full share of mission work in various parts of the diocese. In Feb. 1684 the first was held in Meaux, the Bishop being assisted in it by "un abbé nommé M. de la Mothe Fénelon," the Abbé Fleury, and some Oratorian Fathers.

Bossuet found a system of *Conférences Ecclésiastiques* (somewhat corresponding to our Ruri-decanal meetings) established in the Diocese, but they had lost their spirit and become comparatively useless,

[1] LE DIEU, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 186.

until the Bishop revived them by frequently attending them himself, making suggestions as to the subjects and train of discussion, and bringing before the Clergy assembled the various points concerning spiritual guidance and general teaching which he thought would help them most. He used to encourage men to speak on these occasions, with a view to cultivating readiness in extempore speaking, and would take pains to show them by his own clear, simple words how best to convey their meaning to minds less educated than their own. When any difficult or important subject was under discussion the Bishop would give his own decision upon it, and one instance of his doing this under somewhat peculiar circumstances was long remembered in the Diocese. The conference was being held at Ravoy, which belonged to the Oratorian Fathers, and the question discussed was the plurality of benefices. Of course the judgment pronounced was against a plurality, Bossuet joining in the decision and confirming it by his arguments; but perfectly aware that his practice did not seem to agree with his theory, holding, as he did, the Abbey of Saint-Lucien and the Prieurés of Plessis-Grimaux and Gassicourt, he thought it better to speak openly of a fact which he knew must be present to the minds of all there. So, without blinking it in any way, the Bishop said that, although his personal conduct seemed in contra-

diction to his principles, it was not really so, and he would tell his Clergy why he thought himself justified in being dispensed from the general rule; whereupon he explained how very small his actual revenues were, and how large the claims upon them, especially those of a large number of Protestant ministers, who, when they forsook Calvinism, were left quite without resource save from private charity. It was hardly necessary for Bossuet to make his explanation—every one knew that Germigny was the asylum of all who needed help, and many a literary man and many a devout man found a home there congenial both to his spiritual and intellectual cravings.

During the twenty-two years of his Episcopate Bossuet never omitted meeting his Clergy in Synod any single year until 1703, when the mortal disease, which ended his life not long after, had already prostrated him in intense suffering; and even then he yielded reluctantly to the pressure of pain before giving up what he held to be so sacred a duty. He looked upon this meeting of the Bishop and his Clergy as one of the most important means for the right regulation of the Diocese. If any man had refused to listen or follow his "godly monitions" given in private, Bossuet used to administer his rebuke in Synod, rather than take any active legal measures; and so effective was this method of dealing, that, during his long Epis-

copate, he never but once took legal proceedings against one of his Clergy, and that case (which occurred shortly before his death) was one wherein the offender had been already condemned by the Courts both of Meaux and Paris. Yet even then the Abbé Le Dieu says that Bossuet was with difficulty induced to take active measures. His Statutes and "Ordonnances Synodales" will be found among his diocesan works.[1] Among these are strict rules to prevent the Clergy from leaving their parishes for more than one week without obtaining permission from the Bishop or his Vicars-General; to enforce wearing the cassock, "in order that their very garb may be a continual reminder of the *retenue* becoming their office, and that the people, being used to look at them with respect as different from other men and specially set apart for God's Service, may be the more apt to receive and profit by their teaching;" and forbidding their presence in theatres and at public games. Other *ordonnances* forbid "mercers, bakers, or others" to keep their stalls in the churchyard or porch on Sundays and holy days; give instructions for facilitating confessions, while regulating them according to jurisdiction; and many other points of discipline, to which the laxity of past times made it needful to give heed.

It was in the Synod of October 1686 that Bossuet

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. v. p. 474.

put forth his "Catechism,"[1] with an address to parents as well as to Clergy, which may be read now with profit to all. He presses on the former that catechetical instruction is as much needed at home as in church, and that especially in controversial days, "when women and children handle controversy, and quote Holy Scripture after their own fancy."

"Fathers and mothers," the Bishop says, "you are your children's first catechists, inasmuch as, before they come to church, it is yours to feed them with the milk of the pure Word, which is given to you for them by the Church. You are their first catechists, because it is your part to teach them their catechism, and to make them repeat it at home during the week, otherwise what they learn in the church on Sunday will soon be forgotten. But how can you teach them, if you are not taught yourself? To this end you ought to take part in the public catechising with your children, and carefully renew the instruction you received in your own childhood. Every father and mother of a family ought to read over their Catechism frequently and attentively. It is of the very essence of the great principles of our Christian religion contained therein, that the more they are read, the more clearly their truth comes forth. Many things which we teach our children they do not thoroughly understand till they

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. v. p. x.

get older,—a proof that there is instruction for all ages in the Catechism. And if parents would only study it anew with the view of teaching their children and servants, it would be quite a sufficient reason to make them diligent in so doing." . . .

Bossuet goes on to say: "And you, my brethren of the Priesthood, be diligent in promoting this most necessary custom. Catechise diligently and affectionately—gravely but gently; so that your gravity may inspire respect, and your gentleness may win the affection of your little ones. Before the children say their Catechism, give them a warm, earnest instruction on the subject of the truths they are about to repeat. Let this be short and familiar, attractive and hearty. Always wind up with something striking, and briefly gather together the substance of what you have said. Make use of clear and lively illustrations, calculated to give your children a love of goodness and a dread of evil. Put the future life and the fearful consequences of mortal sin frequently before them; gladden their tender hearts with the thought of eternal rewards; strive to soften and touch their hearts, continually leading them to the love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Go on repeating and dwelling forcibly upon the most difficult and important subjects; and above all, do not grow weary of a labour which is as necessary as it is often toilsome, remembering that you

win a crown of glory in devoting yourself to so useful a work, and that it is the only way by which you will be able to give a good account to God of the souls He has trusted to your care. Remember what S. Paul teaches you in the words: 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, . . . for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. . . . Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.'"

This "Avertissement" was to be read from the pulpit twice a year, *i.e.* on the first Sunday in Lent and on the first Sunday in October.

There are three of these Catechisms of Bossuet's: the first, "for beginners," which, as he says, the children should learn as they begin to speak, with the sign of the Cross; a second, which is intended for those preparing for their first Communion, in which "Christian doctrine," the Decalogue and Sacraments, are explained; and a third, called the "Catéchisme des Fêtes," which embraces many points of teaching suitable to "a good parishioner," the observance of Sunday and the great

festivals, and the special doctrines rising out of these solemnities. These Catechisms were accompanied by a book of "Prières Ecclésiastiques,"[1] the object of which was to enable the people better to join in public worship, giving translations of Psalms, antiphons, responses, etc., explanations of the meaning of the various acts of Divine service, and devotions for Mass, special festivals, etc. Fleury had already published his "Catéchisme Historique," which had been written at Bossuet's suggestion, and was recommended by him to his Clergy.[2]

Among the objects of his most constant, watchful solicitude, stood prominently, as one would expect, the Seminary of Meaux. Bossuet had seen the beginning of this most valuable work, and no one could more fully appreciate the effects of careful theological and spiritual training among the Clergy; to which, like S. Vincent de Paul and the other holy men whose counsels he had shared, he looked as the great hope of saving the Church, and, through her, his country from the many perils overhanging France. He used to visit his own Seminary diligently, encouraging both students and Superiors with his sympathy and advice. One of the points Bossuet used to press most on the latter was the benefit of training their pupils very specially in the habit of speaking readily, and leading

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. v. 208. [2] *Ibid.* p. xv.

them to consider the ministry of the Word as our Lord's special gift to His Church for the evangelising the world. He used to warn the students to avoid all affectation, and even an excessive anxiety to cultivate an elegant or studied style, bidding them rather seek an ardent spirit of love, the promptings of which come from the Holy Ghost Himself. It is not man who speaks, but God in him; it is God Alone Whose All-powerful Grace works through His servants. And while pressing the importance, the absolute necessity of cultivating the gift of preaching, it was always observed that the Bishop prized a recollected manner, and a devout habit of mind, more than any other gift among the Clergy.

Another diocesan work to which Bossuet gave a large share of personal attention was that of Hospitals, which as far as possible he always committed to the Sisters of Charity. Not content with contributing largely to the maintenance of the principal hospital in Meaux, he used himself to go into all the minutest details concerning the treatment and food of the patients. On one occasion, when there had been a scarcity, he gave so liberally to the Hospital that his house-steward remonstrated and begged the Bishop to diminish his supplies. "Nothing of the sort," Bossuet answered, "I would sell all I have to meet these

wants."[1] Such entries as the following constantly occur in the Abbé Le Dieu's Journal:—

"Monday, Jan. 3, 1701.—After dinner the Bishop visited the Hospital and the Sisters of Charity.

"Oct. 19.—The Bishop said Mass for the *Religieuses* de Colomniers, and communicated them all; then he presided at their election of Superieure Assistante, and Conseillières, which lasted till noon. Then he dined, and at 2 p.m. returned to Germigny, after giving many audiences."[2]

The Journal is a string of like entries. Every day, every hour seems to have been filled with such duties, as well as the theological studies and important works of all kinds for which the Bishop also found time.

The Religious Houses of the Diocese all met with his most attentive care and interest. We shall return to the subject of his spiritual direction and dealing with individual souls, a work largely carried on through his active life, chiefly with respect to Religious. But on coming to the See of Meaux Bossuet found various disputes in existence between the See and certain Communities, which it required great tact as well as firmness to quiet. Of these, Faremontier and Rébais were soon reconciled to the See, but the Abbey of Jouarre was a more troublesome matter. For centuries there had been a struggle between this Abbey

[1] Le Dieu, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 188. [2] Vol. ii. p. 237.

and the Bishops of Meaux, who had sometimes yielded to the claims of its Abbess for absolute independence, sometimes appealed, and had their appeal disallowed. But, like many other abuses, the exorbitant privileges claimed by the Princesse Henriette de Lorraine (Abbess of Jouarre at the time of Bossuet's appointment to Meaux) had reached a point at which reaction was inevitable, and the King had interfered in 1680. The Abbess used the revenues of her Abbey precisely as though they were her own private fortune; she rarely went to Jouarre, and when she did her life of pomp and luxury was more consistent with her birth as a daughter of the princely house of Lorraine than as the spiritual head of a religious Community.

Bossuet was not the man to allow such irregularities to go on in his diocese unchecked. He interfered first of all with the Abbess's continual unauthorised absences from her home, an interference which Henriette de Lorraine treated with scorn; whereupon Bossuet took the case before the Parliament of Paris. In a letter to De Rancé (Jan. 2, 1690), he says: "I have engaged in, or rather I am undergoing, a *procès* before Parliament, with a view to remove from the Church, if possible, the scandal of the exemption of Jouarre, which I have always thought to be monstrous."[1]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 452.

An *arrêt* in favour of the Bishop of Meaux was pronounced by Parliament in Jan. 1690, and Bossuet proceeded to establish his jurisdiction; but the Abbess resisted him in every possible way, public and private. At length, finding that his dignified firmness and paternal charity were not to be defeated, Henriette de Lorraine contrived to resign her post (retaining a large pension) to her cousin, Anne Marguerite de Rohan Soubise. This young Abbess began her career in a very obedient, dutiful spirit, but she was soon led astray; and when the Bishop of Meaux interfered, in order to obtain the rightful election of nuns—instead of which the Abbess simply admitted them at her own will and pleasure—she rebelled, and being upheld by her own family, especially by her mother, the Princesse de Soubise, long an avowed favourite of Louis XIV., she reckoned on success. Among an immense mass of letters written to the nuns of Jouarre, some of whom were Bossuet's spiritual children, there is a long one to the Abbess, Mme. de Soubise, on this vexed question, singularly conciliatory and indulgent, considering that it was written by an old Bishop to a young woman who was setting his lawful authority at defiance. But withal Bossuet speaks plainly.

"You must allow me to tell you, Madame, that it is your part to obey. This is what your own heart told you at first, and what it will always tell you so

long as, placing yourself humbly before God, you listen to it alone. . . . Let me urge you to return to your better mind, and submit yourself to the Superior God has given you. If you knew the grace you would receive by such submission nothing would be able to hinder you. I am not going to hurry matters, I would rather wait patiently for your willing consent; I would rather that you came to a right decision of your own accord than use the authority which the Holy Spirit has given me. If you hearken only to God and your own conscience you will hearken to me. Do not imagine that you are lowered by humbling yourself before him who is set over you in the Lord; do not fancy that it is dignified to resist him—all such ideas belong to that world and its spirit of pride which you have renounced, and of which no vestige should remain in you. And do not fancy that obedience lies in words only, as though the recognising ecclesiastical authority were a mere complimentary matter. Those who would be really humble as true Religious must put their obedience in practice, and then God will give them His true and pure light to guide them in their course."[1]

It is pleasant to find that the Bishop's gentleness was not wasted, and that Thérèse de Soubise not only submitted to him, but took the earliest opportunity of testifying her genuine submission by receiving two

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 338.

of her kinswomen as novices of la Jouarre, only upon their due and formal election by the Community.

Amid all these multifarious cares and responsibilities Bossuet seems to have been able always to keep a calm, unruffled habit of mind, and to exercise a judgment singularly unbiassed by prejudice or personal feeling. Probably this was one great secret of the influence he exercised so largely. He had the greatest possible dislike to party spirit or partisanship in any form, although very clear and definite in his opinions and in his support of them, and, until his unhappy strife with Fénelon, no one was less bitter in controversy. One of his familiar companions—Winslow (a scientific Dane, who, having brought introductions to Bossuet, remained at Germigny, and was converted to the Church)—used to tell how, one day, when walking on the terrace at Germigny with the Bishop and Père de Riberolles, Superior of the Meaux Séminaire, something was said about certain Bishops who had professed themselves strong partisans either of the Jesuits or the Oratorians, between whom an urgent controversy was waging:—"They lower themselves on both sides by that," Bossuet remarked. "The Faith does not depend upon individual Societies—it lies much rather with the Episcopate. People may say that I have friends among the Jesuits, and among the Fathers of the Oratory too, but I hope no one will ever be able to

say of me that I belong either to the Jesuit party or the Oratorian party!"

His friends were numerous, and of every class and grade, and all were heartily welcomed at Germigny. That same terrace, Bossuet's only scene of social recreation, must have seen many a gathering of the most intellectual men in France at the time. De Cordemoy the historian, de Vares, Royal Librarian; de Saint Luc, the King's Chaplain; the Abbé Fleury, the geometrician Sauveur, the Orientalists Renaudot, d'Herbelot and Galland, Pélisson, already mentioned, la Bruyère, Boileau, Racine, Santeuil, (whose mythological license once brought severe rebuke upon him, and who soon after published an *amende honorable* in the shape of a Latin poem, headed by a vignette representing Bossuet in full pontificals, with Santeuil kneeling before him on the steps of the Cathedral of Meaux, a halter round his neck, and throwing all his profane rhymes into the fire!) and last, but not least, Fénelon,—all these distinguished men, and many more, gathered round Bossuet. "All agreed," says Fontenelle, "in taking M. de Meaux as their leader. They formed a special society, which was all the stronger inasmuch as it was apart from the great Parisian world, and did not in any degree feel bound to acquiesce in its opinions and judgments."[1] One

[1] *Éloge de Malazieu.*

loves to dwell on this period of intimate friendship between Bossuet and Fénelon,—wishing it were possible to erase the later days of difference and bitter controversy between them. Extremely unlike in most ways, they were specially unlike, socially. Fénelon must have had much the greater attractiveness. Saint-Simon says that "he never seemed conscious of any superiority to those with whom he talked, placing himself on the level of each without seeming to come down to any one,—charming everybody by his perfect ease, never disputing, always appearing to yield, while really leading others after him, always original and inventive, imitating no one, but inimitable himself, combining a *je ne sais quoi* of the sublime with perfect simplicity, which gave a sort of prophetical character to his manners."[1] Bossuet does not seem to have had the great gift of conversational powers for which Fénelon was remarkable;—society was to him merely a season of rest from his laborious studies, while to Fénelon it was an occasion of pouring out the endless treasures of his imagination and *esprit*. Grave and sedate himself, Bossuet's conversation was of the like nature, he despised frivolous and idle talk, and—perhaps naturally in consequence of having filled such important confidential positions at Court—never indulged in anecdotes or topics of the day. Religious

[1] *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*, edit. Delloye, vol. xxii. c. 380, etc.

or moral questions, philosophy, the more solid literature of the period, were the chief subjects on which he cared to talk, and though sometimes he could be playful after a fashion, one has a lurking consciousness that it must have been rather heavy—something of solemnity in his fun! He was a Bishop, and he never forgot it, or wished to be anything else, and probably if he had been told that all the most distinguished strangers who came to the magnificent Court of Louis XIV. thought their mission unfulfilled until they could obtain an introduction to Germigny, and see the great orator of France, he would have smiled the information aside, and discredited the fact. In the same way it became a habit for all the great preachers of the time to offer to come and preach before Bossuet on the anniversary festival of his Cathedral (S. Stephen's Day) at Meaux; and his approval was as much valued as the more demonstrative praise of the Court. Thus Bourdaloue, Massillon, and other great names were brought to Meaux. Bossuet refers to the former in a letter to one of his spiritual daughters,—

"Père Bourdaloue has been preaching a sermon to us which has enraptured our people and the whole diocese."[1]

The Calvinist ministers, and other Protestants who resorted to Germigny for instruction or shelter, have

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 192.

already been alluded to, and we should not have any just idea of Bossuet's work or position as Bishop of Meaux were we to pass over his dealings with the Protestant part of his flock. This was numerous. Meaux was a stronghold of the Calvinists; it was the first French town which had seen a Calvinistic chapel built within its walls; and, at the time Bossuet was appointed to the See, there were about three thousand Calvinists in the place.

When the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) threw dismay upon the Protestants generally, Bossuet did all that conciliation and charity could do to win men to the true faith. He accepted and even applauded the revocation of the Edict, but not the violence and cruelty which followed upon it.[1] His secretary tells an

1 "Il est certain que la révocation de l'édit de Nantes et les violences des princes protestants procédaient d'un état social commun à tous les royaumes, et qui étoit fort vicieux. Les ennemis de Louis XIV. et de l'Église sont tombés en des appréciations fausses et parfois ridicules en voulant juger ces faits d'après les idées plus on moins justes qu'ils ont adoptées, au lieu de prendre pour base de leurs appreciations les opinions qui régnaient universellement au xvii^e siècle. En partant d'une idée personelle fort juste, on peut apprécier philosophiquement un fait en lui-même et isolé; mais on ne peut, sans tomber dans l'erreur, vouloir l'apprécier historiquement sans se transporter au siècle où il a eu lieu, sans s'identifier, pour ainsi dire, à l'esprit de ce siècle. La révocation de l'édit de Nantes, jugée d'après les idées de notre temps, fut un acte mauvais et digne d'être flétri; mais en tenant compte du système politique-religieux qui régnait alors,

amusing story of a large number of vinedressers, called *Capets*, inhabitants of the suburb Saint-Nicolas in Meaux, very ignorant men, who, having been impressed by what they heard, came to Bossuet to be received into the Church, saying, "We doesn't doubt any more, and is convinced us should be Catholics. But, Monseigneur, us can't obey the Pope!"[1] Bossuet gently replied, "What do you mean by obeying the Pope? the King obeys him, and I obey him." This satisfied the poor fellows' theological difficulties, and they made their submission.[2] But a

on le comprend parfaitement, et l'on ne s'étonne plus que les hommes les plus remarquables et les plus doux y aient applaudi." —*Introduction aux Mémoires de l'Abbé Le Dieu*, par l'Abbé Guettée, vol. i. p. cxxiii.

[1] "Je ne doutons plus, et sommes convaincus qu'il faut être Catholiques, et nous convertir entre vos mains. Mais Monseigneur, je ne voulons pas obéir au Pope."—*Vie*, vol. ii. p. 286.

[2] Bossuet's care extended to the humblest of his flock. We find such entries in the Abbé Le Dieu's Journal as the following:—"January 27, 1700.—M. de Meaux being informed that Jean Mauré, a shepherd of Montion, had had the misfortune to kill another shepherd who had attacked and fired at him maliciously, wrote that evening to the Chancellor to prevent the death of the poor man, who was liable to be executed in three days at Meaux, and he could not be at rest until he was reassured as to the life of his *diocésain*. Thursday 28.—M. Parere, first Secretary of the Chancellor, came to announce the man's pardon. M. de Meaux went at once to the Chancellor, to satisfy himself from his own mouth, and wrote off directly to Meaux—saying that it was the special duty of Bishops to use their influence with great people on behalf of the poor."—Vol. i. p. 14.

more elaborate instruction than this was required in the generality of cases, and Bossuet spared no pains to teach the truth, either personally or by means of others. Missions were carried on in different towns of the diocese, schools established, conferences and instructions given; and at this period Bossuet wrote and published several important writings, an "Explication de quelques difficultés sur les prières de la Messe;"[1] a pastoral on "Les Promesses de l'Église;"[2] and another on "La Communion Pascale."[3] About this time, also, Bossuet wrote his "Traité sur la Communion sous les deux éspeces,"[4] an elaborate and learned examination of the whole subject, in which, while acknowledging the absolute necessity of both kinds present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, he maintains the right of the Church to use such discipline in ritual as she sees fit for the greater promotion of reverence, which he considers to be attained by withholding the cup from the Laity. Of course Bossuet goes at length into, and establishes the undoubted fact of the Presence under either kind, and (as appears when he took part later on in certain projects of reunion) he was not opposed to the restoration of the cup to the laity, only he upheld the Church's power to decide such questions, and wished

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 1.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 83.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 241.
[4] Vol. xvi. p. 245.

to prove to the Protestants that the validity of the Sacrament was no wise impaired by its being withheld.

Various replies to this work were brought out, and Bossuet wrote a further answer, in the preface to which he says:[1] "The point is to ascertain whether, in order to a good Communion according to our Lord's own institution, it suffices to receive either the one or the other species, or if it is absolutely essential that both be received. We do not affect to say that the Communion in both kinds is other than good—God forbid! We do not deny that Jesus Christ instituted both, or that He commanded His Apostles to receive both; the question is whether His Divine command obliges the faithful always to receive under both kinds." This second and lengthy work—in which Bossuet goes carefully through the questions of Infant Communion, Reserved Communion conveyed to the Martyrs and dying, etc., as proving that from primitive times the Church admitted of Communion in one kind under certain circumstances—was not published during his life, in consequence apparently of the press of work literary and episcopal which weighed upon him. The first treatise appeared in 1681, but this second part was not published until 1753, when it was given to the world with some other posthumous writings of Bossuet.

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xvi. p. 368.

In times of so much excitement, when public opinion did not deprecate intolerance or religious persecution as it does now, and when tender and refined women could speak almost jestingly of scenes which make us shudder as we read,[1] it implies a great deal to hear that during Bossuet's Episcopate there was never any military execution either in the town or diocese of Meaux. In many parts of the country there was almost civil war, caused by the irrepressible indignation of the oppressed on the one hand and the heavy hand of power putting them down on the other; but Bossuet studiously avoided any military support, and used every effort to give the Protestants as full liberty as was possible after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. On one occasion an *émeute* was threatened at Lisy, a town where

[1] Mme. de Sevigné not only relates the details of the trials for poisoning of 1680, as amusing gossip to her daughter, Mme. de Grignan, but she gives an account of the horrible execution of La Voisin, who was burnt as an *empoisonneuse;* describes how she herself, with Mme. de Sully, Mme. de Fiesque, and other fine ladies, went to see the wretched woman pass to the Place de la Grève, and describes the horrid scene facetiously! After telling another story of like nature, she calmly says, "Je sais encore mille petits contes agréables comme celui là: mais le moyen de tout dire!" and goes on about balls and *grands soupers!* (*Lettres*, vol. vi. p. 377). If horrors could be thus tolerated, and lightly esteemed in polished society, there is less wonder at the tone of persecution which prevailed in religious matters, and this whole state of things ought to be borne in mind in viewing the subject.

there were a good many Calvinists, and some seven or eight hundred armed persons gathered together. The attempt was quickly defeated, and the leaders arrested, and condemned to death. Bossuet heard the tidings, arrested the execution on his own authority, and appealing at once to Paris, he obtained their pardon. One only instance recorded in the neighbourhood of anything like military oppression among the Protestants is an apt witness to the spirit in which Bossuet acted. A certain Protestant gentleman named Séguier, living at his Château la Charmoix, had made himself conspicuous, and his wife still more so, by indiscreet and violent language concerning the King, and at last the Intendant de Paris quartered seven or eight dragoons upon the château, as a punishment of their disloyalty. Bossuet was extremely annoyed at this, and took the unexpected measure of getting the Intendant to send M. and Mme. Séguier to his palace at Meaux, making himself responsible for their good behaviour. The lady began by making herself extremely disagreeable to her host, but after a while both husband and wife could not but be softened by the gentleness and charity shown to them by the Bishop; and the result was that they listened to his instructions, and both became Catholics. Bossuet knew almost every individual in the place, whether convert or in opposition. One of the Canons of

Meaux (Payen by name) has recorded how the Bishop used to go about on foot, and when he knew of a Protestant meeting, knock at the door, and go gently in; and then, if, as sometimes happened, he was met with surprise and mistrust, he would say, "Children, where the sheep are, there the shepherd ought to be. My duty is to seek out my wandering sheep, and bring them home to the fold. What is going on to-day?" And then he would enter into their discussions, and reason and teach them gently and like a father among his little ones. Not unfrequently, if a fine was to be paid, the Bishop would pay half, and it was in vain that the Intendant grumbled continually, assuring him that he was dreadfully imposed upon. Probably this was true, but nevertheless it is a pleasanter thing to think of in a servant of Him Whose sun shines on the evil and the good, than if he had been harsh and ready to punish his poor people for their ignorance and errors—errors into which they or their forefathers would probably never have fallen had the Church always been ruled by such men as Bossuet, and filled with his spirit of true religion and unselfishness.

Although resolutely making Meaux his home and the chief scene of his work and interests, Bossuet could not escape being called to Paris from time to time, when occasions arose which seemed to have a

fitting claim on the great Orator. The first time we find him yielding to such a claim was the occasion of the Queen's death, when Louis XIV. requested him to preach her Oraison Funèbre. This was in 1683. Marie Thérèse d'Autriche had, as we know, drunk deeply of the most cruel humiliations;[1] but latterly the wise influence of Mme. de Maintenon (more probably than the other causes often alleged together with that) had been the means of bringing the King back to a more due treatment of her, and her amiable efforts to do whatever he wished—accompanying him on his journeys, inspecting fortifications, and striving to do whatever was required of her—won some grateful regard from her unfaithful husband.[2]

During the summer of 1683 the Queen made one of these journeys, which must have been a time of very mixed satisfaction to her. Returning to Versailles, the Queen began to suffer from a tumour beneath her left arm, fever set in, and on the fourth day there was evident danger. Her Confessor, wishing to bring the fact before the Queen's mind, quoted S. Paul's words, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord;" upon which Marie Thérèse looked up firmly, and asked, "Then what matters it whether I live or die?"

[1] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. iv. p. 44, v. 25.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 482.

Her seemingly cold, imperturbable nature had been greatly touched at the revival of some tenderness on the part of her husband, and when he came to her bedside bearing a torch, accompanying the Viaticum which was brought to her, she looked imploringly at him, and said, "I hardly know how to bear the signs of affection from you, and I feel I ought to use the few moments which now remain to me in making ready for Eternity." That afternoon (July 30, 1683) she died, at the age of forty-five. Historians may have "wearied themselves," as Voltaire says,[1] "in seeking something to say about her," but there was enough to say concerning less worthy persons, and Louis XIV. himself was constrained to own when she died that, during the twenty years she had been his Queen, Marie Thérèse had never given him any cause for lamentation until that of her death.[2]

It was not till Sept. 1st that her funeral Oration was delivered at Saint-Denis.[3] It was simple and quiet, as its subject had been: there was no flattery in speaking of the white robes which the Queen had kept so clean, for in the midst of that impure, voluptuous Court no word of scandal had ever possibly been raised against the sorely-injured Queen; and the listeners must have confessed the truth of that asser-

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 255.
[2] *Remarques Historiques*, vol. xii. p. 511. [3] Vol. xii. 505.

tion, as well as of the allusion to her "éclatante blancheur" of person—a delicacy of complexion for which Marie Thérèse was renowned from infancy. Bossuet makes a touching allusion to the death of the little Duc d'Anjou some eleven years before, which it had been his duty to announce to the King and Queen; and perhaps the best panegyric on her that could be made was in his words that "she approached her last hour without needing any more special preparation for that awful passage than her past life."[1]

Again, in 1685, Bossuet was summoned to pronounce the funeral Oration of Anne de Gonzague de Clèves, Princess Palatine, whose early life had been of the wildest. About to be made a nun, without vocation—in order that the fortune of her elder sister, Marie, married to the King of Poland, might be larger—she ran away, and at one-and-twenty appeared as a Court beauty, and falling into a love affair with Henri de Guise, followed him to Flanders and called herself Mme. de Guise; but, forced at last to see that he had deluded her with false promises of marriage, she married, in 1645, Edward, son of the Duke of Bavaria. This was altogether a remarkable career, but the Princess became even more remarkable during the Fronde, meddling in almost all that went on in these civil wars, and pronounced by Cardinal de Retz as not

[1] *Remarques Historiques*, vol. xii. p. 529.

inferior to Queen Elizabeth of England in statesmanship. Her private life meanwhile was scandalous, and she mocked at all religion. Bossuet draws a graphic picture of the "deep abyss" in which her soul was plunged,[1] until at last "the Lord brought her back from the depths of the earth," and the last twelve years of her life were spent in a penitence which there is every reason to believe genuine. Bossuet seems to have shrunk from pronouncing this funeral Oration, but he was overruled by the Grand Condé, whose son, Henri Jules de Bourbon, had married one of the Princess's daughters. They were present, together with a large courtly assemblage, on Aug. 9, 1685, when Bossuet delivered it at Val-de-Grace, where the Princess was buried.

But a few months later he was called upon again to make a funeral Oration—this time over his old friend and constant admirer, the Chancellor Le Tellier. Like most other active public characters, Le Tellier had his friends and enemies; perhaps finding de Bussy and Voltaire among the latter rather inclines one to think favourably of him![2] It was under Cardinal Mazarin that he first came into office, and during the troubles of the Fronde he was all-important to the

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 552.

[2] *Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. viii. p. 134. *Siècle de Louis XIV.* vol. ii. p. 177.

Royal party. On the first occasion of Mazarin's retirement Le Tellier retired with him, but, later on, when the Cardinal finally left the government, Le Tellier remained as Anne of Austria's chief minister. In 1666 he resigned his offices to his son Louvois, and, when seventy-four, Louis XIV. appointed him Chancellor and Garde des Sceaux; on which occasion he said, when acknowledging the honour, "Sire, your purpose must be to do honour to my family, and to crown my tomb." It was he who officially signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes[1] as Chancellor. Bossuet had known Le Tellier intimately from the time he went to Paris, and no one had been more anxious than the statesman to see Bossuet filling the important post of preceptor to the Dauphin. In this funeral Oration he speaks of his venerable friend as having often been "aux prises avec la mort," and each time being more resigned to God's Will. "The thought of death did not make his old age less peaceful or happy. . . . He used often to say that one special misfortune of old age was the incapacity to realise a man's own decadence, so as to plunge suddenly into the abyss without having been prepared for it by realising a previous steady decline; and he was wont to entreat his children by all their love and

[1] The Edict of Nantes was granted by Henri IV., April 13, 1598, and revoked by Louis XIV., Oct. 22, 1685.

gratitude for him (which was the blessing of his closing life) to give him timely warning when they perceived his memory or judgment failing, so that he might exercise his last powers in saving the public and his own conscience from the ills which his age and infirmities might otherwise bring on them."[1]

Bossuet's account of the Chancellor's last end is interesting. "For ten days he contemplated his coming death calmly. Always in a sitting posture (rendered necessary by the nature of his malady), one might to the last have supposed he was giving audience quietly, or indulging in peaceful intercourse with cared-for friends. Often he liked to be left alone to commune with death—his memory, his judgment as clear as ever; and even when dying he could not feel death cruel. Night and day it was present to him, for he could not sleep—there was no rest for his eyes until they should close in the cold slumber of death. . . . But do not suppose that this strength rose up suddenly when he was in the grasp of death; it was the result of a life's preparation. . . . He received Extreme Unction and the Viaticum devoutly—his soul was poured forth in hymns of praise. No good man ever trusted in God's Grace with a firmer confidence—no sinner ever asked forgiveness more humbly. Would that I had the pen Job craved for, that I

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 581.

might engrave his words uttered at the last, saying that he had the comfort of remembering that during the forty-two years he had served the King he had never given any advice that was not conscientious, or yielded to any act of injustice it was in his power to hinder." Surrounded by his children, and not afraid of weakness in enjoying their tenderness, the old man cried out amid his bodily pains, "I do not crave deliverance from suffering, but I crave for the Sight of God;" and another time he exclaimed, "I thank God for allowing my body to fail before my mind!"[1] His last breath was drawn as he began to utter the Psalm "Misericordias Domini in æternam cantabo."[2] Bossuet says that the public, "that rigid censor of fortunate politicians," had nothing to accuse Le Tellier of when he died, leaving so moderate a fortune to his family as he did. Of Le Tellier's two sons, one was the well-known minister Louvois, and the other that Archbishop of Rheims already mentioned as assisting at Bossuet's installation. He was a worldly, proud, luxurious prelate, for whom one cannot feel much respect. Although a zealous advocate for the liberty of the Gallican Church, one can hardly give him credit

[1] Le Tellier's thanksgiving reminds one of old Fuller's prayer, "Let my clay cottage totter ere it falls."

[2] "My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the Lord."—Ps. lxxxix. 1.

for a very warm religious feeling in the question; his estimate of secular and spiritual gains may be gathered from his famous saying in the anteroom of King James II. of England, when an exile at Saint-Germain,—"Voilà un bonhomme qui a quitté trois royaumes pour une messe!" Another recorded saying of the Archbishop of Rheims is that "no one can be an honest man who has not ten thousand livres a year!"—a remark very consistent with Boileau's satirical observation on the Archbishop, "Monseigneur m'estime bien davantage depuis qu'il me croit riche!"[1]

[1] *Remarques Historiques*, vol. xii. p. 569.

Mme. de Sevigné, with her usual rapid transition from one bit of gossip to another, tells her daughter (Feb. 5, 1674) of a wonderful sermon of Bourdaloue's, "qui transporta tout le monde; il étoit d'une force à faire trembler les courtisans, et jamais prédicateur Évangélique n'a prêché si hautement ni si généreusement les vérités chrétiennes; il étoit question de faire voir que toute puissance doit être soumise à la loi, à l'example de notre Seigneur, qui fut présenté au temple: enfin, ma fille, cela fut porté au point de la plus haute perfection, et certains endroits furent poussés comme les auroit poussés l'Apôtre S. Paul." And then the Archbishop of Rheims appears on the scene in a less admirable fashion: "Il revenoit hier fort vîte de Saint-Germain, c'étoit comme un tourbillon: il croit bien être grand seigneur, mais ses gens le croient encore plus que lui. Ils passoient au travers de Nanterre, *tra, tra, tra;* ils rencontrent un homme à cheval, *gare, gare!* Ce pauvre homme veut se ranger; son cheval ne veut pas; et enfin le carosse et les six chevaux renversent cul par-dessus tête le pauvre homme et le cheval, et passent par-dessus, et si bien par-dessus que le carosse eu fut versé et renversé: En même temps l'homme et le cheval, au lieu

This Archbishop could hardly have been a real friend of Bossuet's, but he acceded to his request, and paid the last tribute to the aged Chancellor, Jan. 25, 1686, in the Church of Saint Gervais.

But once more did Bossuet undertake this office—and that was on an occasion where his own affections were warmly concerned—on behalf of his old and well-loved friend, the Great Condé. From the time when, as we have seen,[1] the young General was fascinated by Bossuet's earliest eloquence, a warm friendship had existed between them: they met frequently and affectionately, and many letters remain testifying to their close intimacy. Thus we find Bossuet, when a famous Court preacher, sending Condé a sermon he had asked for,[2] as also his Conférence avec Claude, commending a relation, M. de Simon, to him;[3] discussing various literary matters, the death of friends, specially that of M. de Cordemoy, recommending a Curé, thanking Condé for sending one of his *fontainiers*

de s'amuser à être roués et estropiés, se relèvent miraculeusement, remontent l'un sur l'autre, et s'enfuient et courent encore, pendant que les laquais de l'Archevêque et le cocher, et l'Archevêque même, se mettent à crier: '*Arrête, arrête ce coquin, qu'on lui donne cent coups!*' L'Archevêque, en racontant ceci, disoit: 'Si j'avois tenu ce maraud là, je lui aurois rompu les bras et coupé les oreilles!'"—Vol. iii. p. 336.

[1] See page 18. [2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. pp. 133, 312, 329.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 311.

to put his waterworks at Germigny in order,[1] and the like. Condé delighted to gather the literary men of his day around him at Chantilly, and to the last he might be seen wandering about its lovely gardens and shady groves with Racine, Boileau, la Bruyère, Bossuet, and other celebrities.

Condé died December 11, 1686, at Fontainebleau, whither he had gone to visit the young Duchesse de Bourbon, his grandson's wife. Bossuet gives the details of his end with a strong expression of deep personal interest. Condé, as the close of his life approached, sought spiritual guidance, and made great efforts to control his naturally excitable, irritable temperament: he read the Bible diligently, and endeavoured to prepare for death. It was in such a mental attitude as this that he was called to see, as was feared, the death of the young Duchess;—Louis XIV. (whose daughter she was by Madame de Montespan) being also summoned. Perhaps his anxiety for her (though she recovered favourably) hastened

[1] Condé took great delight, after his retirement, in the beautiful grounds of his ancestral home at Chantilly, and apparently he had ridiculed Bossuet's humbler decorations in the fountain department, as the latter says, after asking pardon for having detained the *fontainier* so long, "Il a travaillé avec beaucoup de soin jusqu'à hier; et pour moi, je me suis rendu si parfait dans les hydrauliques, que dorénavant vous ne me reprocherez plus mes âneries."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 334.

Condé's end. He became ill, and was told that death was near. "My God, be it as Thou wilt," was his reply: "I cast myself upon Thee, give me grace to die well."[1]

Funeral orations are supposed to be sensational, but that Bossuet had no great love for striking death-bed utterances may be gathered from what he says of Condé's dying hours: "His last moments are worthy of record, not because they were remarkable, but precisely because they were *not* so, and because there was nothing done or said for effect by a Prince so well known to all the world. . . . He had no talent for pompous sayings; in death, as in life, truth was his real greatness." Three times successively he asked for the last prayers for the dying, and thanking his physicians, he turned to the priests standing by and said, "These are now my best doctors." His confessor said something of the need to ask God to mould His people's hearts, suggesting the prayer, "Make me a clean heart, O God." Condé remained awhile pondering deeply, and then turning to the priest he said, "I never had any religious doubts, whatever people may have said. But now," he went on, "I believe more than ever. All the great mysteries of the Faith grow clearer and clearer to my mind. Yes indeed, we shall see God as He is, Face to face:" and he repeated

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 683.

again and again, fondly dwelling on them, the Latin words, "Sicuti est, facie ad faciem."

Louis XIV. desired that the last honours paid to his noble kinsman should be as magnificent as possible, and assuredly the heartfelt words spoken over him were more effectual to this end than even the pomp and splendour lavished externally on the ceremony. Madame de Sevigné is at home in the description of it.

"Once more sadness and death, *mon cher cousin*," she writes. "But how could I fail to tell you about the most beautiful, most magnificent, and most triumphant *pompe funèbre* which has ever been seen since there were mortal men to die! I mean that which has taken place to-day at Notre Dame for the late Prince. All our *beaux esprits* have exhausted their energies in setting forth all this great Prince was and has done. His ancestors were represented in medals as far back as Saint Louis, all his victories by *basses-tailles* (or bas-reliefs), covered with a sort of open-cornered tent, and borne by skeletons, whose attitudes were admirable. The mausoleum, reaching nearly to the dome, was covered with a pavilion-like dais higher still, its four corners falling like tents. The whole choir was decorated with these *basses-tailles*, with devices below, embodying all his life's history. The period of his *liaison* with Spain is described by a dark shield, on which three Latin words say, '*Ce qui s'est fait loin du*

*soleil doit être caché.*' Everything was powdered with fleur-de-lis of some dark tint, and beneath was a lamp shedding abroad ten thousand little stars. I forget half, but you shall have the book with all details. . . . Everybody has been to see this pompous decoration. It will cost the present Prince a hundred thousand francs, but such an expenditure does him infinite honour. M. de Meaux preached the funeral oration: that we shall have in print. This, my dear cousin, is a rough sketch of the play. If I could venture to make you pay double postage, you should have more. So much for our sadness. But to comfort you somewhat, I will turn to the other extreme—that is to say, from a death to a marriage."[1]

Bossuet's oration was delivered in Notre Dame, March 10, 1687, "in the presence of all that was mightiest in France," as he himself says. There was something specially stirring to his large heart in this duty, as he looked back to the days that were past; and there was also a delicate manipulation required in treating Condé's erratic course, taking arms, as he had done, against the King and his country. But Bossuet was equal to the emergency, and faced it without flinching. The earlier part of his oration is more historical than theological, and a great deal of attention was attracted by the parallel he drew between

[1] *Lettres*, vol. viii. p. 221.

Condé and his other noble warrior friend, Turenne.[1] Bossuet was not—to his credit be it spoken—a favourite among mere courtiers or such men as the Comte de Bussy, who reports that "the funeral oration of M. de Meaux did no credit to either orator or the dead. I hear that the Comte de Gramont, on coming from Notre Dame, told the King that he had been hearing M. de Turenne's funeral oration."[2] Madame de Sevigné, writing an enthusiastic account of Bourdaloue's oration over the same great man, or rather over his heart, which was taken to the Jesuits' Church, refers to Bossuet's, which she says is "very beautiful, and written with a masterly hand. The parallel between the Prince and M. de Turenne is rather startling, but the preacher excuses himself by denying that it is a parallel, saying that it is rather a grand spectacle which he puts before us of two great men, whom God gave to serve His Majesty," etc.[3]

There is something very touching in the way which Bossuet's personal friendship breaks out at the close, dwelling rather upon the man he loved, and the Christian who had departed in peace, than upon the great soldier or hero,—alluding to the first in "the voice that was well known to him." There is also a personal allusion, such as we rarely find in Bossuet's

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xii. p. 627. [2] *Lettres*, vol. viii. p. 226.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 238.

public speaking, to himself. His hair was already grey, and though, as it proved, many years of life and labour were yet before him, he began to feel the vigour and power of youth declining; and the closing words of this his last great effort in public are: "Well is me if, reminded by my white hairs of the account I must soon give of my stewardship, I devote the remaining powers of a failing voice and expiring energy to the flock which I am bound to feed with the Bread of Life."

His energies were indeed not expiring yet, however at that moment the shortness of life and its emptiness might be pressing upon him; and we have still to follow Bossuet through an arduous course of labour and toil before really the failing voice and expiring energies laid down their burden at their Master's Feet, and Eternal Rest was granted to him who had used his stewardship so long to his Master's Glory.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BOSSUET IN CONTROVERSY.

HISTOIRE DES VARIATIONS—LETTER TO DR. BULL ON HIS BOOK—JURIEU—BASNAGE—DR. DUPIN—CARDINAL SFONDRATI—LORD PERTH—CONVERSION OF THE DUKE OF RICHMOND—QUIETISM—FÉNELON—EARLY LIFE—APPOINTMENT AS PRECEPTOR TO THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE DUKE AND HIS FATHER—FÉNELON APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY—MOLINISM—QUIETUDE—BOSSUET'S WRITINGS ON QUIETISM—MADAME GUYON—CONFERENCES OF ISSY—CARDINAL DE NOAILLES—APPEAL TO THE POPE—INTRIGUES AT ROME—MADAME DE MAISONFORT—THE ABBÉ BOSSUET—CABALS AND JEALOUSIES—CONDEMNATION OF FÉNELON'S BOOK—BOSSUET'S VEHEMENCE.

BOSSUET'S *Exposition de la doctrine Catholique* had been a powerful agent among the Protestants, and some among them had tried to lessen its influence by accusing the author of varying in his statements when the definitive edition was published,—the fact being that at first only a few proofs were struck, and Bossuet had discussed these with various learned theologians, and had altered, most assuredly not the doctrine, but in some cases the manner of expression first employed. Probably Bossuet would have let such accusations pass unnoticed, but while

studying an important Protestant book published at Geneva—the "Syntagma Confessionum fidei"—he was so struck with the contradictions, the confusions, the incoherent chaos of the Protestant confessions of faith—one controverting and repudiating another, here affirming what there was denied—that he determined to gather together in writing the substance of his study, and to point out to his wandering brethren the fatal errors to which their rule of private judgment had led them. The result of this was the learned and singularly clear and forcible book called "Histoire des Variations des Églises Protestantes."[1]

It was in 1682 that Bossuet projected this work; but he did not find time just then, amid the innumerable occupations and literary undertakings already mentioned, to execute his intentions, and it was not till 1689 that the book was published.

To give a complete analysis of it would be to go through the history of the Reformation. But the religious and political state of Europe should be borne in mind by those who read it. Love of novelty, private judgment, and contempt for authority had led to deplorable results, of which the climax had been the judicial murder of the King of England. That the outbreak of Puritanism, which flooded England with misery and sin, arose in a great measure from the

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xiv.

pernicious heresies of Calvin, probably no one questions, and, as it has been said, his disciples, in their fanatical dread of superstition, put their fellow-men to death and murdered their King for the sake of trivial differences in rites and ceremonies! Hitherto such controversy as had been published was chiefly confined to details of doctrine or practice. Bossuet himself, in his earlier writings, had done little but answer doubts and objections raised—generally in good faith—by Protestants. He had studiously avoided whatever savoured of attack or provocation. But meanwhile prejudice grew and throve. The greater number of Protestants were altogether ignorant of the real history of their schisms. They looked upon their leaders as wise men, far above earthly passions, who, holding stedfastly by the pure faith of antiquity which others had degraded, alone raised their heads above delusion and change. But the "Variations" dispelled such illusions. Therein is clearly set forth the endless differences of Protestant confessions of faith and their utter self-contradiction.

Bossuet goes through the varying doctrinal phases of the first reformers—Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and Calvin, etc.; their self-contradictions concerning justification by faith; concerning the Real Presence—vigorously maintained by Luther, denied by Zwinglius, with Melancthon adhering first to one and then to another:

he sums up the labours of Bucer, that "great architect of theological subtleties," who was perpetually drawing up confessions of faith capable of endless interpretations. Nor does he deal in vague assertion—his affirmations are always quoted from the original words. So too with the four different editions of the Confession of Augsburg, all pronounced authentic, all at variance—whether of which was actually presented to Charles V. being still unknown. The bitterness between Lutherans and Calvinists is brought out, the contests between the Sacramentarians and both Lutherans and Zwinglians; and the Fifth Book—of which Melancthon is the chief subject, for whom Bossuet has a very evident *tendresse*—is specially interesting. The Ninth Book contains a masterly summary of Calvin's history. One fancies Bossuet must have smiled over the apology made in reply for the murder of Servetus by the minister Basnage, that "it was the remnant of papistry left in Calvin!" So too the account of Albigeois and Vaudois given in the Eleventh Book is perhaps more instructive than any work extant on the same subject. The books which treat of the English Church and its share in the Reformation, of course, take a very different standpoint from those which face the Protestant question, but, with Bishop Burnet for his chief authority, and with the recent miseries of England, political and religious,

yet present to his memory, Bossuet sees some matters in a form which it is not too venturesome to say he would alter now; while he gives the Church of England credit practically for holding true doctrine, and brings her mistakes and errors mainly to a political question.[1]

Robert Nelson sent Dr. Bull's *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ* to Bossuet, whom he describes in his life of the Bishop of St. David's as "one of the politest writers of the age, and very much esteemed in France for his great learning, as well as his good sense; and less could not be expected from a person chosen for a preceptor, to instruct the Dauphin of France at a time when that nation abounded with great men. This considerable prelate had, upon several occasions, expressed a great value and esteem for Dr. Bull's learning and judgment; so that, from the commendations the Bishop had bestowed upon our learned author's former performances, I thought it not unlikely that his lordship would give a favourable reception to this production, which was so very acceptable to many other learned men. And indeed I was not disappointed in my expectations; for this small acknowledgment I made to his lordship for the many great favours he was pleased to confer upon me when I was

[1] Bossuet markedly speaks of Anglicans as *priests*, in opposition to Protestant *ministers*.

last in France was received by him with a satisfaction which could arise from nothing so much as from the entertainment he met with in that excellent treatise. It happened that when my letter and Dr. Bull's book were delivered to his lordship he was then at St. Germain-en-Laye, with the rest of his brethren met in a general assembly, which is composed of all the Archbishops and Bishops of the kingdom of France. . . . Upon this occasion the Bishop of Meaux not only read Dr. Bull's book with great care and exactness himself, but thought fit to communicate it to several other Bishops of the greatest eminence for their learning and skill in divinity, and for those other talents which are necessary to adorn that high station in the Church. They also perused it with no less pleasure than satisfaction, the result whereof was to make a compliment to the author from that great and learned body; and I was desired by the Bishop of Meaux, in a letter from his lordship, not only to return Dr. Bull his humble thanks, but the unfeigned congratulations of the whole Clergy of France, assembled then at St. Germain's, for the great service he had done to the Catholic Church in so well defending her determination of the necessity of believing the Divinity of the Son of God."[1]

Bossuet's letter is dated

[1] *Works of Bishop Bull*, Oxford edit., vol. i. p. 327.

"A St. Germain-en-Laye, 24 *Juill.* 1700.

"J'ay receu, Monsieur, depuis quinze jours une lettre, dont vous m'honorez de Blackheath auprès de Londres en m'envoyant un livre du Docteur Bullus, entitulé *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ.* Je vous dirai d'abord, Monsieur, que je ressentis beaucoup de joie à la veue de vostre écriture et de vostre nom, et que je fus ravi de cette marque de vostre souvenir. Quant à l'ouvrage du Docteur Bullus, j'ay voulu le lire entier, avant de vous en accuser la reception; afin de vous en dire mon sentiment. Il est admirable, et la matière qu'il traite ne pouvoit estre expliquée plus savamment et plus à fond. C'est ce que je vous supplie de vouloir bien luy faire savoir, et en mesme temps les sincères congratulations de tout le Clergé de France assemblé en cette ville, pour le service qu'il rend à l'Église Catholique, en defendant si bien le jugement qu'elle a porté sur la necessité de croire la divinité du Fils de Dieu."[1] Naturally Bossuet goes on to express a wish that Dr. Bull were Roman as well as Catholic.

Jurieu and Basnage both attacked the Bishop of Meaux, and their attacks led to the publication of a "Defense de l'Histoire des Variations,"[2] as also to a succession of six "Avertissements," answering different points of attack.[3] His answer to the accusation of

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xv. p. 329. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* vols. xiv. and xv.

idolatry[1] is extremely interesting; Bossuet affirms in the strongest language, "Our whole religion attests that we ask nothing of the greatest saints, or of the Blessed Virgin, but their prayers."[2] And he refers to England, saying, "All England pleads our cause celebrating even as we do the festivals of the Saints All Saints included."[3] The various replies of the ministers further led to Bossuet's writing again on Communion in both kinds,[4] by saying: "From the earliest times it has been the custom of the Church to communicate under one or both species, without either being held to be deficient as regards a perfect Communion." Bossuet then goes on to give his proofs from the practice of the primitive Church; while for those to whom Luther's authority carried weight (as it did among some of the contesting ministers, though not with the Calvinists) he quotes the German Reformer's contemptuous assertion that it is a "worthless matter," and that if a Council were to order Communion in both kinds, he would only take one, in order to mark his contempt for the authority of Councils.[5] There are some exceedingly

[1] Vol. xv. p. 331.

[2] p. 337.

[3] p. 362. Bossuet mentions "l'Église de Saint Paul à Londres" in confirmation of the English Church holding the same doctrine concerning the Saints as the rest of the Western Church.

[4] *Œuvres*, vol. xvi. p. 245.

[5] p. 433.

interesting pages concerning Infant Communion in one kind in the primitive Church[1] and in the Greek Church.[2]

In a letter to Dom Mabillon, the Benedictine, Bossuet, after speaking satisfactorily of the English Apostolical succession, goes on to say, alluding to his hopes of reunion: "Speaking of this, it seems to me that there is one thing which would greatly promote reunion with England and Germany—*i.e.* the restoration of the Cup. It was restored in Austria and Bavaria by Pius IV., but the remedy had no great effect. Men's minds were still too excited. But the same thing conceded at a more propitious time, like the present, would be more successful."[3] Mabillon answers that the King of England had better "demander la chose."

The Chapters on the Presanctified both among Greeks and Latins are also most valuable,[4] and will well repay a careful study; here they can but be mentioned.

Before leaving the subject of these controversial writings, attention should be drawn to the prophetical

[1] p. 561.

[2] Who that has ever witnessed the most touching Communion of infants in the Greek Church but must most earnestly desire that we retained that beautiful and gracious custom, and that our little ones were likewise made partakers in the life-giving Body of Christ by Holy Communion?

[3] Vol. xvi., *Lettre CXLVIII.*, p. 350. [4] p. 609.

spirit in which Bossuet foresaw that Socinianism was a necessary result of Calvinism, and must inevitably invade those quarters where it prevailed.[1] Probably Bossuet's summary of the reasons why the Church is so unloved by Protestants holds good now as much as then; we have daily cause to remember it. "It is," he says, "far more than any other of her dogmas, her holy and inflexible incompatibility, if one may use such a word; it is that she is the Bride, and as such must stand alone, that title cannot be shared; it is because she cannot allow a doubt to be thrown over any of her dogmas, because she believes in the promises and in the perpetual aid of the Holy Spirit. . . . It is this inflexible firmness which, while it makes the Church to be abhorred of schismatics, also makes her so dear and so venerable to her children, since thereby she confirms them in a faith which cannot change, and enables them to say everywhere and at all times, 'I believe in the Catholic Church;' a profession of faith which does not merely mean, 'I believe that there is a Catholic Church, which is a Society wherein the children of God are bound together,' but, 'I believe that there is a Catholic Church, a one only, universal, indivisible society, wherein the truth of Jesus Christ, Who is the Life and Food of Christians, is unchangeably taught;' which does not merely mean, 'I believe

[1] VI. Avertissement, vol. xvi. p. 116.

in the Church's existence,' but 'I believe her doctrine, without which she would not exist, and must lose the name of Catholic."[1]

The pretended prophetical publications of Jurieu drew forth another publication from Bossuet's prolific pen in 1689, an "Explication de l'Apocalypse,"[2] which he calls the "Gospel of the Risen Saviour, the Conqueror of death, speaking and moving in all the brightness of His Glory."[3] Following S. Augustine in his general commentary on the grand and mysterious Revelations granted to S. John, Bossuet does not hesitate to say that we must bow reverently before much therein as wholly beyond human interpretation. "The future," he says, "almost always turns out differently from what we expect, and those very things which God has revealed to us concerning it, happen quite otherwise than we look for; therefore I am altogether silent as to the future." The Protestants themselves could not swallow Jurieu's audacious pretensions as a prophet, and several of their synods censured his book.

Among the many theological questions into which Bossuet's recognised position as almost—probably

[1] Vol. xvi. p. 234. That Bossuet was not prepared for the assertion of new dogmas, is strongly set forth in the ensuing pages.

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. ii. p. 300.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 303.

quite—the leading mind in the Gallican Church, obliged him to enter, one arose in 1691-92 through the young Sorbonne Doctor, Louis Dupin, whose manner of treating the Fathers of the Church and certain Councils seemed to the Bishop of Meaux not only wanting in due reverence, but verging on false doctrine. His opinion to this effect, strongly expressed, led to a Commission on the Abbé Dupin's works, named by the Faculté de Théologie. Dupin's defence did not satisfy Bossuet, and he published a *Mémoire* on the subject, which is in fact an elaborate history and critique on the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon.[1] A letter from Fénelon (March 3, 1692) alludes to this work :

"I am delighted," he says, "to see the vigour of the old Doctor and ancient Bishop. As I read, I fancy I see you gripping hold of Dupin as an eagle grips a sparrow-hawk!" The poet Racine was a relative of the Abbé Dupin, and he persuaded Fénelon to plead with the great Eagle to spare the sparrow-hawk; and always kind to offenders, however severe to the offence, Bossuet allowed Racine to bring Dupin to call upon him, accepted his apologies and explanations, and encouraged the young author to devote his talents and passionate love of study to God's service.

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xx. p. 544.

In 1697 Bossuet attacked a work of the late Cardinal Sfondrati on Predestination, and refuted its errors in a letter[1] to Pope Innocent XII. signed by four other Bishops. In addition to all these various theological questions—(and one of the most weighty we have not yet approached), Bossuet carried on a a learned correspondence with Cardinals, Prelates, Doctors, Abbots and Clergy innumerable, in a series of letters,[2] of which those that remain may give one some idea of what the whole of his correspondence must have been. Of his spiritual letters we have more to say. One while he is recommending a Curé to Henri de Bourbon, son and successor of the Great Condé,—and taking possession meanwhile of his nephew's letters, in order to prevent the required letter from Poitiers following the Abbé Bossuet to Lyons; playfully promising "fidelity as to his other letters. *En passant*, Monseigneur, I would have you remark that I am a good uncle."[3]

Then there is an interesting series of letters between the Bishop of Meaux and Lord Perth, one of James II.'s ministers, who, being a man of natural piety, found himself cast upon strangely troubled waters in the unhappy days through which England was passing; and having the claims of the Church of Rome strongly

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 519. [2] *Ibid.* vol. xxvi. etc.
[3] Vol. xxvi. p. 338.

pressed upon him by those he loved, while his own Church slumbered and slept and made no claim, as he thought, on his allegiance,—he surrendered to the eloquent reasoning of Bossuet's writings, and instead of learning Catholicism only from them, and abiding in his own branch of the Catholic Church, as perhaps at a happier time he might have done, Lord Perth formally joined the Roman Church. His admiration for Bossuet was intense, and while apologising for a comparison which he felt would wound the Bishop's humility, he could not refrain from repeatedly likening him to Saint Charles Borromeo, and Saint Francis de Sales—his two favourite saints. Lord Perth is anxious that Bossuet should not suppose him to be seeking his counsel merely because of his great name: "It is to the saint that I appeal for help, not to the great man out of mere vanity."[1] And in another letter, he says, "I declare sincerely that if I were my own master, and were not tied to residence here (Windsor) by the office in which God's Providence has placed me, I would joyfully purchase the privilege of three hours' talk with you by travelling barefoot to Meaux, and begging my bread by the way. Of all the instruction I have received, nothing has put things in so clear a light, or confirmed and convinced me so much, or dispelled the mists of my ignorance like to

[1] *Lettre CLVII.*, vol. xxvi. p. 365.

your writings. Each letter I receive from you is as a jewel to me; I derive both profit and pleasure from them;—they kindle my good resolutions, and not only do they promote my intellectual growth, but they strengthen my will for the service of God, and His Holy Church."[1]

In the winter of 1688, when William of Orange drove his father-in-law from his kingdom, Lord Perth shared in his master's troubles. He was seized and imprisoned for more than two years in Stirling Castle, and in spite of his age and infirmities it was with difficulty that at length he obtained leave to follow the King to France. Lord Perth remained in attendance upon James II. until his death, which occurred at Saint-Germain in 1716. While imprisoned he writes to Bossuet:

"STIRLING CASTLE, *January* 21, 1689.

". . . The hitherto unaltered fidelity of my house has brought me here, abiding faithful to the King my master, who has been so cruelly outraged;—and I am under deep obligation to you, who through the Grace, Mercy, and Goodness of God, have been the means of, so to say, sanctifying my sufferings, which have become not merely endurable, but really welcome to me. I am suffering now both for my king and also

[1] *Lettre CLXIII.*, p. 380.

for my God; and if there is a noble greatness in suffering for the love of one's sovereign, how much more for one's religion and one's conscience? As for me, I am one of the weakest men possible; there is nothing in me of my own, capable of upholding me. Nevertheless I thank God for His Mercy to me, which is more than abundant, so that at times I even have scruples, because I am not more disturbed at all that has happened. . . . Doubtless you often see my dear Royal Master. There is no one whose eloquence and piety are more capable of comforting him. . . . I am very strictly watched, and this letter is written and sent secretly; and as most likely I may never have another opportunity of writing to you, I here ask your blessing and your prayers. I trust that our Lord, Who made use of you as the instrument of bringing me to the Faith, and who has granted me, all-unworthy, the privilege of suffering for it, will grant those prayers, and give me the blessing of a happy death and a joyful eternity.

"Just as these troubles began, I wrote to thank you for your admirable book.[1] Happily that escaped the hands of the mob, when they pillaged my house, but they burnt a crucifix, the king's portrait, yours and mine, all together at the market cross of Edinburgh. You see they kept me in good company!

[1] The "Variations."

"I have one very humble intreaty to make, namely, that should it be God's Will that I die during these troubles, as seems very likely, and that my wife resolves on going to France, you would help her with your counsel and authority, and that you would fill a father's place to my son, and be a friend to my brother. I feel that I am very presumptuous in making such requests, but my special circumstances are an excuse which I am certain you will accept. I pray you, give me your blessing, which I crave on my knees."[1]

Bossuet's reply must have been very comforting to the prisoner of Stirling Castle. He wrote from Meaux, on March 14 following, and after encouraging Lord Perth in his loyalty and endurance, he tells him that he often saw the King, and speaks of his composure and patience under his troubles in high terms.

"I know not how it is," he goes on to say, "but as I write, I forget that you are suffering and in captivity. God knows that I felt keenly for you when I heard of your woes;—but now I almost seem to forget them in the lively joy I feel at the courage with which God has inspired you, and the abundant consolations with which He gladdens you. I share in them most heartily,—I glory with you in your shame, and I could not refrain from tears of joy as I read of your persecutors having burnt my portrait with that of your

[1] *Lettre CLXXXVIII.*, vol. xxvi. p. 446.

master and your own, and all three with the Crucifix! Would to God that instead of my portrait only I could in person be with you to encourage you in your sufferings, and to take part in the glory of your confession. . . .

"You must have gathered from all my letters how warm a love I bear to England and Scotland, for the sake of the many Saints who have flourished there, and the faith which has borne so much fruit. Hundreds of times I have longed for the opportunity of labouring for the re-union of the noble Island, for which re-union my prayers rise up to Heaven perpetually. My longing does not slacken, or my hopes grow cold.

"Be at peace, you servant of God. . . . He will deliver you when He sees fit; it may be that His Angel is even now gone forth for your deliverance. But come what may, you are God's, and you will be a sweet savour to Him in life or in death. Your wife, whom you commend to me, shall be as my sister; your son shall be mine own in the bowels of Jesus Christ; your brother, whose worth I have already experienced, shall be as a brother and heart's friend. And as to you yourself, you live for ever in my heart; night and day I will offer you to God, especially when I offer up the Holy Victim Who hath taken away the sins of the world. Fight on as a good soldier of Jesus

Christ; let your sufferings be the means of mortifying all that is yet of this world in you; let your conversation be in Heaven. If you are deprived of priestly help, be sure that you have the Great High Priest, the Bishop of our souls, the Apostle and Sovereign Priest, even Jesus, with you; your desire will win for you the grace of the Sacraments, and in His Name I give you the blessing for which you ask. Remember us in your prayers; I trust that God will grant you to ours, and deliver you from the hand of the enemy. In His holy love I am," etc. etc.[1]

But few letters to Lord Perth of a later date have been saved. In one addressed to him at Rome, October 9, 1695, Bossuet says, "You are at a Court where, while there is a great deal of religion in some, there is a great deal of *politique*, which will amaze you, in others. But amid the working of human thought, God's work is fulfilled."[2]

In 1685, Bossuet had been summoned to receive another noble Englishman into the Roman branch of the Church Catholic,—the Duke of Richmond, natural son of Charles II. and the Duchess of Portsmouth. Bossuet does not appear to have had anything to do with the spiritual side of the matter, but as Louis XIV. wished to make the act one of political importance,

[1] *Lettre CLXXXIX.*, vol. xxvi. p. 448.
[2] *Lettre CCXXVIII.*, p. 505.

he took pains to give it all the publicity and importance available, and for this reason he summoned the Bishop of Meaux to Fontainebleau to display his eloquence before all the Court.

But what we cannot help looking upon as by far the most interesting of all the controversies in which Bossuet was concerned during his long and busy life, is that which unhappily embittered his friendship with one of the best, most saintly, most attractive and loveable of men, either of that period or any other in the Church's history,—Fénelon. Before entering upon the less happy days of controversy, let us linger a few moments over the bright skies of Germigny and Meaux, while the two friends as yet knew no division of thought and aspiration.

François de Salignac de Lamothe Fénelon was the child of a second marriage between the old Comte de Lamothe Fénelon and Louise de Saint-Abre,—both ancient families of Périgord. He was born at the Château de Fénelon, August 6, 1651, so that he was twenty-four years younger than his distinguished friend and contemporary, Bossuet. Educated first at the University of Cahors, he went thence to Paris, where his uncle, the Marquis de Fénelon, sent him to the Collége du Plessis. This uncle was himself a remarkable man: his early days had won no small distinction

as a soldier—indeed, the Great Condé said of him that he shone alike in society, war, or politics; but without waiting to be forsaken by the world, he turned his best thoughts to a holy life, and put himself under the direction of the Founder of Saint-Sulpice, M. Olier. He was the first to co-operate in that good man's vigorous efforts to put down duelling, then so extravagantly general, and became head of the association formed by M. Olier for that purpose. No one of less acknowledged courage and reputation could have dared to take such a step, and the Great Condé could not refrain from telling the Marquis that it needed his thorough knowledge of what he was not to make him tremble at such a step![1]

Losing his only son, who was killed at the siege of Candia, the Marquis adopted his nephew, of whom he had already taken charge, and the interest of his life was centred in him and an only daughter, who subsequently married the Marquis de Montmorenci-Laval.

Fénelon's early talents resembled those of Bossuet. Like him, we hear of sermons preached at fifteen, and of an overwhelming popularity, which seemed to his uncle, who knew the world's dangers so well, a peri-

[1] "Il faut être aussi sûr que je le suis de votre fait sur la valeur, pour n'être pas effrayé de vous avoir vu rompre le premier une telle glace."

lous snare for his adopted child; and, not dazzled by its charms, he placed the young man at Saint-Sulpice, then under the direction of the venerable Tronson. At this time the Jansenist controversy had already waxed high, and the Jesuits and Port-Royalists were in vehement opposition. Fénelon (of whom a biographer says that he was "the Jesuits' friend without ever becoming their slave, and opposed to the Port-Royalists without ever being their enemy"[1]) might have become a much more active partisan but for the sober, uncontroversial spirit of his wise director, Tronson, for whom he speedily contracted an almost passionate affection, and to whom he confided every thought of his eager, loving heart. The Saint-Sulpiciens avoided all party as much as possible: their one object was to train priests for God's service, and their system and régime is altogether different from that of the Jesuits.[2] While yet a student, the younger Fénelon seems to have desired to throw in his lot with the Canadian Missions, the Saint-Sulpiciens having at that time a large establishment at Montreal. He informed another uncle, the Bishop of Sarlat, of his intentions,

[1] CARDINAL DE BAUSSET, *Histoire, Vie de Fénelon*, vol. i. p. 11.

[2] Cardinal de Bausset, enlarging upon this, and upon their disinterestedness, says that during the hundred and fifty years which had elapsed when he wrote since the foundation of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, her members had never once appeared in any law court whatsoever.—*Ibid.* p. 21.

but they were not acceptable. Fénelon's youth and his delicate health were good grounds on which to discourage the plan, and he submitted to his uncle's will, and remained at Saint-Sulpice until, being ordained, he joined the Community of priests who served the parish. It was an admirable school for priestly training (M. Languet, the Curé, while upwards of a million francs passed yearly through his hands in alms, had only a serge coverlid and two straw chairs as the furniture of his own room), and while working there, Fénelon learnt to be familiar with the many sorrows, sins, and sufferings which beset humanity in every class and position of life, and acquired the power of tender compassion and sympathy for those sufferings which was one of his chief characteristics. Here too he began first to exercise his office as a preacher, and the Church of Saint-Sulpice, among the many precious memories with which it greets one, numbers that of having been the scene of Fénelon's first sermons. For three years he worked at Saint-Sulpice, and then, 1674, his uncle the Bishop summoned him to Sarlat, where his missionary ardour rose up again, and he was on the point of going out to the Missions of the Levant; but again this intention was forestalled, and Fénelon had to content himself with home work. The Archbishop of Paris, de Harlay, appointed him Superior of a Community called *des Nouvelles Catholiques*, and he

took up his abode with his uncle, the Marquis de Fénelon, who lived in the Abbey of Saint-Germain des Prés. This was apparently the time when he first knew Bossuet, whose friendship with the elder Fénelon has been already mentioned, as also with the Duc de Beauvilliers, both friends of Tronson, and both ready to be favourably disposed towards one of whom he thought so highly. Bossuet from the first appreciated the young priest, and their intimacy became close and affectionate. The Archbishop is supposed to have been jealous of this; he was disposed to look upon Bossuet as a rival at Court and in ecclesiastical affairs, and he was annoyed at seeing a rising man like Fénelon attached to what he was pleased to consider the Bishop of Meaux' party rather than to his own.[1]

On one occasion, when Fénelon appeared at the Archiepiscopal Palace (where he rarely went save

[1] De Harlay was evidently an ambitious, worldly man, and while always on the best and friendliest terms with him, Bossuet, himself so free from worldliness, felt it keenly. The Abbé Le Dieu says in his Journal, "When the late M. de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, died suddenly, August 6, 1695, M. de Meaux was so much moved to think that though he had for so many years enjoyed such large revenues, he had done nothing for his Church, nor had he thought of praying to God for his soul, that he (Bossuet) determined at once to make some foundation in his own case without waiting for his end. The opportunity was found in a sale of wood the following autumn. He set apart 4000 francs from the price of some wood," etc.—Vol. ii. p. 6.

when needful), the Archbishop met him with the cutting remark : " M. l'Abbé, it seems you wish to be forgotten, and you shall be." [1] The threat, however, had no influence in diminishing the close friendship between Fénelon and Bossuet, and the death of the old Marquis, in 1683, served to draw them still more closely together. Bossuet's profound learning and experience were always ready to be used on his friend's behalf; he advised and directed the young Abbé's studies, and evidently was in the habit of reading and criticising his writings, some of Fénelon's manuscripts —he began early to be an author—having corrections and marginal notes in Bossuet's handwriting. Often he used to go with the Bishop to Germigny, where, with a few chosen friends, especially Fleury and Langeron, Bossuet delighted to take a breathing-time from his public toils, and refresh himself with spiritual and intellectual study and conversation.

De Harlay might intend Fénelon to be forgotten by the world, but God had work for him to do which did not admit of such forgetfulness. He was known by reputation to Louis XIV., who first sent him to conduct the Missions to the Protestants of Poitou and Saintonge,—an undertaking accepted by Fénelon only on condition that the King would withdraw his troops, and suffer the ministry of peace and reconciliation to

[1] " Vous voulez être oublié, vous le serez."

have full scope, free from the strong hand of the law. At his request Langeron and Fleury, as well as one or two other intimate friends, were given him as fellow-labourers. Fénelon was greatly troubled by the mistrust and purely secular considerations which prevailed amongst the people, and which made it so difficult to feel that there was any real religious conviction attained among them. "If one wanted to make them abjure Christianity and accept the Koran" (he wrote sadly to Bossuet), "one could easily do it by showing them a company of dragoons."[1] In the same letter Fénelon complains of the length of time he has been kept away from Bossuet, adding, with the playfulness which creeps into all he writes, "If they keep us much longer away from you, we will suppress the Ave, or perhaps tumble into some monstrous heresy, in order to incur a lucky disgrace that may take us back to Germigny!"

At length Fénelon obtained leave to quit Poitou and return to Paris, where, so slender was his ambition, he immediately resumed his quiet routine of work, and for two years never went near the Court. For a time de Harlay was successful in suppressing the rising man he feared. Fénelon was nominated by the King to the Bishopric of Poitiers, but de Harlay induced him to revoke the appointment, of which

[1] *Vie*, vol. i. p. 79.

rumour only informed Fénelon;—and shortly after the Bishop of la Rochelle came to Paris to ask for the same able man as his coadjutor, when again the promotion was frustrated by Fénelon's persevering enemy. But God only permitted such hindrances to prevail until the time He had chosen to bring His servant into more active external service for the Church. We have seen Louis XIV. selecting governors and preceptors for his son the Dauphin, and now the time had come when a like selection was to be made for that son's son, the little Duc de Bourgogne, born in 1682, of the Bavarian mother whose Court life has been already spoken of.

The King was now an older and a wiser, certainly a sadder man than in the days of Montausier and Bossuet, whose influence had been so fruitlessly exerted against that of Madame de Montespan and her friends. To her lawless attractions and power the sober, earnest, and religious influence of Madame de Maintenon had succeeded. Françoise d'Aubigné had gone through many trials in her early years, and a desolate orphan, unkindly treated by the aunt with whom she found an inhospitable home, she had gladly married Paul Scarron, for the sake of his name and protection. Left at twenty-five a beautiful and poor widow, she received a small pension from the King, who selected her as governess to the little Duc de

Maine, his child by Mme. de Montespan.[1] It was through her correspondence with Louis XIV. on this subject that he gradually learnt to like her for her talents, clear judgment, and general intellectual superiority; and weary of women whose mental defects and violent tempers could not always be forgotten for their beauty, he found rest and repose in one of so different a calibre. Madame de Maintenon's society became essential to the King, but she would not afford it him on the terms he had been accustomed to bestow his favours, and accordingly, under the advice of his confessor Père la Chaise, Louis XIV. married her privately (January 1686), in a small private chapel at Versailles, Archbishop de Harlay performing the ceremony, at which Père la Chaise and two attached servants only were present.[2] Louis XIV. was then forty-eight and his bride fifty-two. Her influence, which continued powerful with the King during the remainder of his life, was generally used in a right direction, and now, when the question of his grandson's education arose, it made itself felt.

[1] "Elle fut nommée à cet emploi par le Roi, et non point par Mme. de Montespan, comme on l'a dit. Elle écrivoit au roi directement; ses lettres plurent beaucoup. Voilà l'origine de sa fortune: son mérite fit tout le reste. Le roi, qui ne pouvoit d'abord s'accoutumer à elle, passa de l'aversion à la confiance, et de la confiance à l'amour."—*Siècle de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii. p. 9.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 5.

The Duc de Beauvilliers had been her intimate friend for some time past:—he was one of the few courtiers who never would make up to Mme. de Montespan, and the King was quite capable of respecting such independence of character; so that in 1685, when the death of Marshal Villeroi left the honourable post of *Chef du Conseil royal des finances* open, Louis XIV., unasked, gave it to M. de Beauvilliers, then thirty-seven years of age. Probably therefore the King needed but little prompting on Mme. de Maintenon's part, when he decided on appointing de Beauvilliers Governor to the Duc de Bourgogne, which occurred August 16, 1689; and the very next day, at his request, the King appointed Fénelon preceptor. His voluntary absence from the Court prevented gossip from reaching him readily, and the news of the two appointments reached Fénelon simultaneously.

Bossuet heard of them as soon as Fénelon himself, and the letter which he wrote to congratulate Mme. de Laval (the cousin who had been brought up as a sister with Fénelon) proves his opinion on the matter:—

"A GERMIGNY, *ce* 19 *Août* 1689.

"Yesterday, Madame, I was absorbed in the good fortune of the Church and State, to-day I have had leisure to dwell more immediately upon your joy, which gives me the liveliest satisfaction. My admirable and

beloved friend your father has been very forcibly brought to my mind. I have been picturing to myself how he would feel on this occasion, and on the shining forth of merit which has hitherto so carefully concealed itself. *Enfin*, Madame, we shall not lose the Abbé Fénelon, you will be able to enjoy him, and provincial as I am, I shall escape from time to time to go and embrace him. Accept, I intreat you, the expression of my rejoicing and the assurance of the respect with which I remain, Madame, your very humble and very obedient servant,

J. BENIGNE,
Évêque de Meaux."[1]

Amid the universal approval and congratulations which flowed in upon both the new appointments, Fénelon's revered director Tronson alone addressed him in words rather of warning than of felicitation. His letter is so admirable, that we cannot refrain from giving it at length :—

"You will perhaps be surprised not to have found me already amid the crowd of those who are congratulating you on the honour his Majesty has recently conferred on you. But I beseech you humbly not to judge hardly of my brief delay : on an occasion which interests me so deeply, I felt I could not do better than begin by thanking God for His designs concern-

[1] *Vie*, vol. i. p. 89.

ing you, and asking Him to continue to bless and guide you. I have tried to do both with as little imperfection as I am able,—and having said this I may assure you that I was really delighted to hear that you were chosen.

"The King has given an evidence of his piety and a satisfactory proof of his discernment by this appointment, which in itself is very comforting. The education committed to you by his Majesty is so closely bound up with the welfare of the State and the good of the Church, that every good Frenchman must rejoice to see it in such hands; but I must tell you honestly that my rejoicing is mixed with fear when I consider the perils to which you are exposed, inasmuch as it cannot be denied that, in the ordinary course of things, all promotion makes a man's salvation more or less a work of increased difficulty. It opens the door to earthly greatness, but you must fear lest it should close that of the real greatness of Heaven. It is quite true that you may do very great good in the position you fill, but you may also incur very great evil. There is nothing indifferent in such an office; your actions for good or evil must almost inevitably have infinite results. You are now inhabiting a country[1] where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is but little known, and where even those who know

[1] Tronson obviously means the Court by this.

it chiefly use their knowledge in order to win to themselves honour of men. You will live among people whose language is altogether heathenish, and whose example almost universally tends towards perilous things. You will find yourself surrounded by a multitude of objects which flatter the senses and are specially calculated to rouse the most dormant passions, and you will need a great grace and a prodigious fidelity to withstand impressions at once so powerful and so forcible. The horrid mists which prevail at Court are enough to obscure the clearest and plainest truths. It does not take a long familiarity with its tone to make a man look upon precepts which he once appreciated, and believed to be unquestionable while meditating them at the foot of the Cross, as exaggerated and extravagant. Duties which once seemed absolute invariably begin to appear doubtful or impracticable. A thousand occasions arise when you will fancy that prudence and charity itself constrains you to deal gently with the world; yet nevertheless it is surely a strange position for a Christian, still more so for a Priest, to find himself forced to compound with the enemy of his salvation! In truth, dear friend, your part is a dangerous one;—confess honestly that it is very difficult not to lose ground in it, and that you need a very confirmed grace in order to stand therein. If ever study and meditation

of Holy Scripture were necessary to you, now indeed they become overwhelmingly indispensable. Hitherto perhaps you have needed them chiefly to fill your mind with good thoughts, and to nourish it with truth, but henceforth you will need them as a shield from evil impressions and falsehood. Above all it is of the utmost importance that you never lose sight of the eventful hour of death, when all this world's glory will melt away from around you as a dream, and every earthly stay on which you may have leant must fail.

"Unquestionably your friends will comfort you with assurances that you did not seek the post, and that certainly is a matter of satisfaction and a great mercy of God to you, but you must not trust overmuch to it. One often has a larger share in one's own promotion than one fancies;—it is very rarely that a man foresees it and sincerely avoids it:—one does not come across many who have attained such a height of self-abnegation. A man does not always eagerly seek commonplace means of advancing himself, but nevertheless he does not fail to put aside obstacles cleverly; he does not earnestly solicit those who can advance him, but he is not sorry to let them casually see his best side;—and it is just to these little human displays that the first steps of his promotion are to be attributed;—so that no one can quite confidently say that he has had no part in his own elevation. The

display of one's own talents, which one often makes, almost without thinking about it, is really a very great peril, and it is well always to strive to efface such by the aspirations of a humble and contrite heart.

"I am afraid you will think this letter too long, and too unreserved,—in fact more like an ill-timed sermon than an acceptable congratulation. I should assuredly have been briefer and less open if I cared less for your soul—and you must attribute it to my heart's love, which cannot be other than warmly alive to your true interest. Believe, I intreat you, that I shall never cease to pray that God would fill you with the unchanging spirit of His Love, so that no temptation may alter or weaken the holy mind with which that will inspire you. It is the Church's prayer for her children.—I am," etc. [1]

Langeron and Fleury, Fénelon's two intimate friends and former colleagues, were again associated with him in his new task, the former as reader, the latter as *sous-précepteur*;—the last office being also shared by the Abbé de Beaumont, a nephew of Fénelon's—of whom in passing let it be said, lest Tronson's pupil should be suspected of nepotism, that he continued to fill the post for ten years without ever receiving any token whatever of Court favour, and finally shared his uncle's

[1] DE BAUSSET, *Hist. de Fén.*, vol. i. p. 91.

disgrace, "having nothing to desire or to regret." It was not till after Fénelon's death, that in 1716 he was appointed Bishop of Saintes.

At this time Fénelon was thirty-eight years old, and it is evident that he was personally one of the most attractive, captivating men ever known. All contemporary evidence speaks of the "extraordinary charm of his manner." It does not appear that he was strikingly handsome, though his personal appearance must have been very agreeable and taking. Saint-Simon says that he was a "tall, thin, well-made man, with a large nose, eyes whence fire and wit streamed forth as in a torrent, and a countenance which none I have ever seen resembled, and which one could not forget if once one had seen it—it was such a combination of different things, and yet the opposite characteristics were all so blended:—it was grave and cheerful, serious and lively, it was alike in keeping with the theologian, the Bishop, and the *grand seigneur*. In every expression, as in every action, *finesse*, wit, gracefulness, decorum, and above all a noble bearing, prevailed. One did not know how to leave off looking at him:—his pictures are all like, but without having caught the perfect harmony of the original, or the singular delicacy of his countenance. His manners were exactly corresponding to his face, full of an ease which imparted itself to others, and of that grace and

good taste which only comes from familiarity with the world and its best society, a grace with which all his conversation was intuitively marked."[1] The Chancellor d'Aguesseau says of Fénelon, that "he was one of those rare men who are destined to stamp their age, and who do as much honour to human nature by their goodness as to learning by their superior talents." He goes on to describe the Archbishop of Cambrai as brilliant, ready, graceful, taking an involuntary lead without ever making it felt—winning more by attractiveness than by vehemence, supreme by his fascination as much as by his talent; condescending to every capacity, and appearing to yield to others while actually he carried them all before him. "There was a certain noble singularity about him, a something sublime in his simplicity, . . . he was always original, always creative—imitating no one, he was himself inimitable."[2]

We have already spoken of the very different influence obtained over their respective pupils by Bossuet and Fénelon; perhaps the singular charms of the latter's personality may have its full share in accounting for the difference, for Bossuet, good and high-minded and wise as he was, certainly had not this altogether peculiar fascination. But the royal

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. xxii. p. 135.

[2] D'AGUESSEAU, *Œuvres*, edit. Pardessus, vol. viii. p. 195.

father and son were also essentially unlike, and while it seems possible that Fénelon's attractive, loving ways might have modified the timid, stupid character of the Dauphin, it likewise occurs to one that Bossuet's conscientious but drier treatment might scarcely have developed the real good of the Duc de Bourgogne's fiery temperament, but on the other hand would very probably have driven him to desperation.

"*Il naquit terrible!*" Saint-Simon says,[1] "and in his childhood one trembled."

"Harsh, passionate to the point of being utterly carried away in his fury towards inanimate things, desperately impetuous, unable to endure the slightest resistance even from the elements or time, without flying into rages which made those present fear lest his whole frame should burst asunder; excessively obstinate, passionately fond of all pleasure, and good living, furiously fond of hunting, ravished by music or gaming, though he could not stand being beaten, in which case it was an extreme danger to play with him—in short, a prey to every passion; often sullen, naturally cruel, savage in raillery, seizing the ridiculous points of others with an intolerable accuracy, from the heights of his own greatness he looked upon other men as mere specks in creation, with whom he had simply no resemblance whatever. He barely looked upon his brothers as a

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. xv. p. 79.

sort of intermediate degree between himself and the human race in general, although there was always a pretence of bringing them up in perfect equality. There was talent and penetration in all he did; even in his outbreaks his repartees were astounding, and his answers had somewhat of depth and accuracy even when he was in a rage; he enjoyed learning, his intellectual grasp and vigour were great, so as to make him incapable of attending to any one thing wholly." [1]

Such was the child who while still almost a baby—he was barely seven years old—was put into the hands of a man unaccustomed, so far as we know, to dealing with children, and whose tastes and habits must have made much of his duties wearisome and almost intolerable. Fortunately for the little prince, his preceptor started with the wise theory of having no theory—save indeed that of watching his charge from hour to hour, and adapting his treatment to the ever varying moods and needs of the "enfant terrible." Many a time he had to grapple with the desperate fits of rage and fury of which Saint-Simon speaks, and they were dealt with by gentleness, but with absolute firmness.

All his attendants treated the passionate little prince on these occasions as an unfortunate being

[1] De Bausset, *Hist.*, vol. i. p. 103.

who degraded himself so that he could only be pitied, and to whom charity might minister, but much as it would do to an idiot or lunatic. His books and maps were taken away, as being useless to one in such a state, and he was left to himself and his own convictions, which generally had the effect of bringing him in a fit of almost equally vehement penitence, to throw himself at Fénelon's feet, with the frankest confession of his faults, kissing his hands with many tears, and abounding in good resolutions, which, often broken, gradually grew stronger, and ultimately won the day.

Two childish documents still preserved, voluntarily drawn up and signed by the little prince before he was nine years old, are characteristic of his royal notions of honour :—

"Je promets, foi de prince, à M. l'Abbé de Fénelon, de faire sur-le-champ ce qu'il m'ordonnera, et de lui obéir dans le moment qu'il me défendra quelque chose ; et si j'y manque je me soumets à toutes sortes de punitions et de déshonneur. Fait à Versailles, le 29 Nov. 1689. Signé, Louis.

And :—"Louis, qui promets de nouveau de mieux tenir ma promesse, ce 20 Septembre. Je prie M. de Fénelon de le garder encore."

In despite of these promises, *foi de prince*, the little

Duke's submission was not always absolute; and on one occasion, his preceptor being forced to rebuke him sharply for some serious misdemeanour, he was met with the insolent answer, "Non, non, Monsieur, je sais qui je suis, et qui vous êtes."

This could not be tolerated, but Fénelon made no reply at the time, only treating the prince with a serious silence during the rest of the day, which was calculated to impress him with awe. The next morning, as soon as the boy was awake, his preceptor appeared in his room, and speaking with a grave dignity very unlike his usual bright friendliness, he reminded Louis of his ill-conditioned speech, going on to say that it was his duty to teach the Prince that he did not know what either really was. "You, Monseigneur, suppose yourself to be greater than me—some of the servants it may be have told you so—but since you oblige me to do so, I must tell you *que je suis plus que vous.* You can understand that it is not a question of birth, which adds nothing to your personal merit, and you cannot doubt but that I am above you in knowledge and understanding. You know nothing but what I have taught you, which is as nothing compared with what you have to learn. As to authority, you have none over me, whereas on the contrary I have the most full authority over you. Possibly you think that I consider myself very for-

tunate in holding the office I fill towards you—if so, undeceive yourself. I undertook it to obey the King and Monseigneur, not at all for the irksome advantage of being your preceptor; and to prove it, I am now going to take you to His Majesty, and ask him to appoint another, whose care of you may I hope be more successful than mine."

The little Duke was exceedingly fond of Fénelon, and a night's quiet had brought compunction for his misconduct, as well as a keen sense of the injury to his name in public opinion (to which the small creature was already sufficiently alive!) arising from the resignation of such a preceptor for such a cause. So many tears and sobs and entreaties were spent in striving to win a promise that Fénelon would forgive him once more. It was not for a whole day, however, or till Madame de Maintenon had interposed her mediation, that Louis succeeded in getting the longed-for promise that Fénelon would not leave him; and this lesson was never forgotten. But we shall see that to the last, long after his pupillage was ended, the Duke received and welcomed the rebukes and counsels of the well-loved preceptor, to whom he used to say, "Je laisse derrière la porte le Duc de Bourgogne, et je ne suis plus que le petit Louis avec vous." Unlike his father, who could never be induced really to care for study, even by all Bossuet's painstaking endea-

vours, this boy delighted in learning, and according to Fleury's account (and he was not a boaster), the Duke must really have been somewhat of a prodigy. Papers are still existing in Fénelon's handwriting, ordering the exact course of his studies from day to day; and one is disposed to think that they were made pleasanter and less dry than his father's had been, although, in 1696, we find him reading parts of the Fathers—Saints Augustine, Jerome, and others, and the *Histoire des Variations* by his father's great preceptor. The *Histoire Universelle* was used too, but obviously Fénelon's mode of teaching was less a matter of routine and rule than that of Bossuet. His religious instruction was at least successful in the most substantial sense; for during the remainder of his short life, the Duc de Bourgogne was steady in frequenting the Sacraments, and found comfort and strength in so doing. Saint-Simon says that he "communicated fortnightly with a recollection and humility which struck all who saw him;" and what was even a more certain proof of the value of his religious training, he learnt through it to control the vehement, passionate nature which promised so much danger in the beginning.

There was another point of resemblance between the Court lives of Bossuet and Fénelon,—the same entire disinterestedness in money matters. We have seen the former hardly able to maintain a due exterior;

and for five years of his preceptorship Fénelon was so limited in means, that unless his cousin, Madame de Laval, had lent him plate and other necessary articles, he could not have got on at all. A word to Madame de Maintenon or the Duc de Beauvilliers would doubtless have altered this, but Fénelon's extreme delicacy and freedom from the love of money prevented him from ever speaking that word. The small Priory of Carennac, which his uncle, the Bishop of Sarlat, had given him, was all his revenue—about 4000 livres. In January 1693, writing to the Marquise de Laval, he refers to the delays of his salary and the exceeding dearness of prices, adding, "I am about to dismiss all my servants, unless something come in shortly. . . . Let all that can be sent to me from Carennac, after the necessary alms have been supplied, for in very truth I would rather live on dry bread than let any of the poor in my benefice suffer." [1]

It seems strange that with Madame de Maintenon's extreme liking for Fénelon, she, who was so practical and understanding a person, should not have provided against such difficulties; but her own character was markedly disinterested as the King's wife, and she admired and understood Fénelon sufficiently to believe him equally free from self-seeking. She persuaded him to take part in the religious education of her Con-

[1] *Vie*, vol. i. p. 154.

vent at Saint-Cyr, and that her own personal intercourse with him was of an essentially confidential character is proved by her asking him to tell her in writing of her faults, a paper in reply being found among her documents.[1] At this time, indeed, Madame de Maintenon contemplated replacing her old director, the Abbé Gobelin, by either Fénelon or the Jesuit Father, Bourdaloue. The latter declined the post on the ground that he had not time to see the lady more than once in six months, somewhat to her surprise; for, as she naïvely remarks, "*la direction de ma conscience n'etoit point à dedaigner :*" and then she hesitated between Fénelon and the Abbé Godet des Marais, who also refused, but yielded to the authority of Tronson, to whom, like most men of piety of that day, he deferred implicitly. "I have often wondered why I did not take the Abbé Fénelon, whose every characteristic pleased me, and whose goodness and talents had so won me, whereas everything on the other side repulsed me," Madame de Maintenon wrote at a later date. About this time, after five years' preceptorship, the King gave Fénelon the Abbey of Saint Vallery, which relieved the pressure he had experienced. On the very day of his nomination to the See of Cambrai, he resigned this preferment. The King refused to accept

[1] This and other papers will be published in a forthcoming Life of Fénelon.

his resignation, but Fénelon insisted, pointing out to Louis XIV. that, according to the Canons, the revenues of Cambrai excluded him from holding a plurality. Le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims, with whom disinterestedness and unsecularity were not a strong point, remarked, on hearing of this, that "M. de Fénelon, thinking as he did, had chosen the better part; but for himself, thinking as *he* did, he should hold fast what he had got!"

The death of Pélisson in 1693 brought Fénelon into the Académie Française, and about this time, when his fame and popularity were at their height, there seem to have been evil-disposed persons at work endeavouring to make mischief between Bossuet and Fénelon, and by implication to lead the former to jealousy of the younger man. Estrangement unhappily was hereafter to arise between the friends, but both were too large-minded, and too noble, for it to be introduced in such a shape. Bossuet endorsed by his own observation and practical opinion all that could be said in praise of Fénelon's education of the Duc de Bourgogne, and that channel of mischief-making was closed. But another and more fatal issue was to be opened with the unfortunate history of Quietism; a history in which of a truth Bossuet comes out to less advantage, and with less power to command respect or admiration than the Archbishop of Cambrai.

The mystic system which created so tremendous a disturbance in the Church of France came from Spain, where Molinos had systematized Quietism towards the end of the seventeenth century. His doctrine taught:

I. That "perfect contemplation" is a condition in which the soul neither reasons nor reflects, whether upon God or itself, but passively receives the Divine Light without making any effort of love, adoration, or other acts of Christian religion. This condition of passivity Molinos calls *Quietude.*

II. In this state of "perfect contemplation" the soul desires absolutely nothing—not even its own salvation; it fears nothing, not even hell; the one only feeling of which it is conscious is utter abandonment to God's Good Will and pleasure.

III. The soul which has attained this state of "perfect contemplation" is dispensed from any need of Sacraments or good works,—all of which become indifferent to it. All outward things, even the worst, may touch the sensitive part of the soul without polluting it, because they do not reach its superior side wherein the will and the intelligence dwell.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that these doctrines were formally condemned by Pope Innocent XI. in a bull dated 1687. Nor perhaps, looking at them from one side only, and freed from the more dangerous elements—leaving only that of love so intense that it

can hope and fear nothing save an utter abandonment to the Will of God—is it to be wondered at that pure, loving, exalted souls should be found ready to take them up warmly, as befell in France.

In 1695 Bossuet published a learned *Traité sur les États d'Oraison*,[1] in which he examined closely into the characteristics and errors of Quietism:—

"The summary of its errors," he says,[2] "lies in seeking sublimity and perfection in things which do not exist, or at all events do not exist in this life, thereby involving their suppression in certain conditions;—as also the suppression of many acts which are commanded by God and essential to piety, in other conditions, and in those called *perfect contemplatives;* for instance the explicit acts of faith contained in the Apostles' Creed; all petitions, including even those of the Lord's Prayer, all reflection, acts of thanksgiving, and similar acts which are ordered and practised throughout Holy Scripture and the writings of the Saints. Such opinions for the most part arise from the pride inherent in the human mind, which always aims at self-distinction, and which consequently without watchfulness is always prone to mingle an arrogant singularity[3] with its religion, even with its very prayer." Bossuet goes on to explain the leading doctrine of

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xviii. p. 367. [2] p. 393.
[3] "De superbes singularités."

Quietism, *i.e.* that perfection consists, even in this life, in a continual, invariable act of contemplation and love, and that the soul which has once thus given itself to God need never repeat or renew its act,—a theory which, he goes on to prove, does away with the need of recollection in prayer, or of any continued effort to keep up the most necessary acts of religion.

It was a woman who was the means of opening this much-vexed controversy in France. The celebrated Madame Guyon—Jeanne Marie de la Mothe—was born at Montargis, April 13, 1648. Left a widow at twenty-eight, her natural ardour and religious temperament first found a guide in the Bishop of Geneva, Mgr. d'Arenthon, who sent her to help a Community at Gex, where she renewed a former friendship with a Barnabite Monk, Père la Combe, who indoctrinated her with the principles of Quietism, and who seems to have encouraged, if not originated, a mania on her part[1] for becoming the foundress of a mystic association within the Church. The Bishop of Geneva disapproving of Madame Guyon's proceedings, she left Gex, and for a time followed Père la Combe about to Thonon, Grenoble, and Vercelli, respectively;—making proselytes to the new doctrines. At last the Bishop of Grenoble, Cardinal le Camus, civilly requested her

[1] *Lettres sur le Quiétisme*, Mme. Guyon to P. la Combe, *Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 573.

to leave his diocese, and in 1687 she took up her abode in Paris. Unfortunately Madame Guyon's friends had printed two books of her writing,—one called "Moyen Court de l'Oraison," (which is dealt with in Bossuet's above-named treatise,) the other "l'Explication Mystique du Cantique des cantiques." These books, and the exertions made by Madame Guyon and the Barnabite Father to spread their doctrines, caused a multitude of letters and accusations to follow them to Paris, and Archbishop de Harlay was obliged to take the matter up. Père la Combe was arrested in October 1687, and as he held obstinately to what were considered his errors, he was kept in confinement, first in the Ile d'Oléron, and then at Lourdes in the Pyrénées. In January 1688 Madame Guyon was also arrested, and placed in the Convent of Sainte Marie de la Rue Saint Antoine. Accused of all manner of delinquencies, theological and moral (for her self-imputed prophetic office had led her into sundry unconventional, indiscreet proceedings), she nevertheless disarmed all who came in contact with her by her simplicity and evident perfect honesty of intention. Madame de Miramion knew the nuns in whose charge she was, and excited by their rapturous admiration of their prisoner's holiness and unction, she made Madame Guyon's acquaintance; and, fascinated like the nuns, carried a touching tale

of injured innocence and plaintive charms to Madame de Maintenon, who—hearing the same story from her favourite, Madame de Maisonfort, (then at Saint-Cyr, and a relation of Madame Guyon,) as also from her most intimate and zealous friend the Duchesse de Béthune—was altogether carried by storm, and, not without some hesitation at interfering in an ecclesiastical question of the sort, she took measures to promote the release of the prisoner. Archbishop de Harlay acquitted Madame Guyon of any faults in morality, and as she was willing to renounce all her errors, and offered to burn her writings, she was set at liberty after eight months' abode with the nuns of Sainte Marie.

Up to this time neither Bossuet nor Fénelon had ever seen the lady who was destined to sever their friendship. Fénelon was prejudiced against her:—he disapproved of the way in which she had forsaken her young children to go on a self-appointed mission afar off, and of her peculiar modes of proceeding; and the enthusiastic praises lavished on her by Mme. de Béthune made him still further mistrust her. However, passing through Montargis, he made some inquiries about this much-discussed person, and was touched by the unanimous tribute to her piety and goodness which met him in her old home; so that when, after her liberation, he met her in Madame de Maintenon's salon (where the Duchesse de Béthune

hastened to introduce her), he was prepared to look upon her more favourably, and in a short time Madame Guyon obtained a strong influence with Fénelon as with the de Beauvilliers, the Duc de Chevreuse, and Madame de Maintenon herself. The latter was not quick in taking likings, but she soon became fascinated by the manners and conversation of the charming *Quiétiste*, and grew positively eager to introduce her at Saint-Cyr, where the Superior, Madame de Brinon, was prepared to welcome her, and Fénelon made no opposition. So Madame Guyon became an established visitor there, and she read her most exciting papers and taught her peculiar opinions freely; fully persuaded that a great apostolic work rested upon her shoulders. Louis XIV. seems to have taken a practical view of the matter. Madame de Maintenon mentions in a letter to Mme. de Saint-Geran that she had been reading some of the "*Moyen Court*" to the King, "who said it was nothing but dreaming;"—adding, "He has not made sufficient progress in piety to enter into this perfection."

The Abbé Godet, who eventually had a large share in the history of Quietism, was more suspicious of this "nouvelle spiritualité," as he called it. He was a grave, learned man, most devout and most single-minded. Although Director to Madame de Maintenon, he rarely visited the Court; but she saw him continually

at SaintCyr, of which he was sole Director, all the more easily, as it was in the diocese of Chartres, of which he reluctantly became Bishop. As before Tronson had to insist on his becoming Madame de Maintenon's Director, so again he had to insist on his accepting the episcopal burden, which Godet wanted to refuse. His whole life was in keeping with this reticence. He absolutely rejected the office of *Conseiller d'état*, and the Cardinal's hat, both of which Louis XIV. pressed on him; and when, in 1693, he resolved to sell his plate on behalf of the poor famine-struck of that period, there was only one fork and one spoon forthcoming, which he sold! The Bishop of Chartres objected to a woman mixing herself with theological matters, and setting up as a teacher of spiritual things; but he was very charitable in his judgment, and thought there must be good in what charmed so many good people—so he only warned Madame de Maintenon to be cautious, and not to encourage too great familiarity between the new teacher and her Saint-Cyr religious. Evidently she was more disposed to push the intimacy than either of her spiritual guides. "Yield heartily to the Abbé de Fénelon and M. de Chartres," she writes to Madame de Maisonfort. "I myself shall always be submissive to the opinion of those two Saints. . . . My want of experience in these things set me against the Abbé Fénelon, when he did not wish to show

these (Mme. Guyon's) writings. But he was right. It is not everybody that has a sound and straightforward judgment."

After a time, however, the Bishop of Chartres, having duly watched the progress of Madame Guyon's teaching, became convinced that it was dangerous, and must be withstood. He loved Fénelon dearly, and was most unwilling to go against him; nevertheless he felt bound to tell Madame de Maintenon that he considered this new system to abound in error; and, divided between her duty to her director and her affection for Fénelon, she appealed to Bossuet, who now for the first time appears in the drama. The Bishop of Meaux entirely agreed with his brother of Chartres. Then she had recourse to M. de Noailles (at that time Bishop of Châlons), and he expressed himself still more strongly. Still Madame de Maintenon could not bring herself to think Fénelon mistaken, and she secretly consulted Joly, the Superior of the Lazarists, Tiberge and Brisacier, heads of the *Missions Étrangères*, Bourdaloue, and Fénelon's own dearest friend and director, Tronson. All replied gently and charitably, but decisively, as against Madame Guyon's doctrines.

Meanwhile Fénelon was vaguely conscious of a storm thickening round him, but he scarcely heeded it. He sincerely believed that Madame Guyon's opinions were like his own, as to a pure, sublime love

of God; he looked upon her as a calumniated, misunderstood woman; but he was as ready as any one to counsel that her intimacy at Saint-Cyr should be checked, and that her books should not be read there. So far was he from prejudice, that it appears Fénelon himself suggested that Madame Guyon should refer to Bossuet, put all that she had written into his hands, and submit herself to his decision.[1] Nothing could be kinder than the Bishop of Meaux was when she did so, and to all appearance her intentions were perfectly straightforward. She gave him all her papers without any reserve,—even a manuscript autobiography, which she had not shown to Fénelon. Bossuet took these documents with him to Meaux; and six months later, after a most careful examination of them, he pronounced, as his opinion, that the lady's "genre d'oraison" was akin to Quietism, and that the excessive and extravagant self-conceit which she displayed was a great risk to her, unless she was disabused of her illusions and received wiser guidance. But, he says, "the Bishop saw plainly that he was not believed, and that the Abbé Fénelon revered Dame Guyon as a very extraordinary woman. As-

[1] So Bossuet himself says, *Relation sur la Réfutation de la Quiétisme*, *Œuvres*, vol. xx. p. 90, and vol. xxviii. p. 563: "C'etoit l'Abbé de Fénelon qui portoit à toutes ces démarches. Le prélat excité par les sentiments qu'il avoit pour un ami très intime, apportait d'autant plus de soin à cette discussion."

tonished at this strange blindness, and deploring the mistake of so great a mind, he sought day and night for some means of quietly undeceiving his friend."[1] At the same time, Bossuet met Madame Guyon at the Convent du Saint-Sacrement in the Rue Cassette, and, after a long interview, gave her the Holy Communion at his own Mass, which naturally led to the inference that he was satisfied with her.

Fénelon did not see so much error in Madame Guyon's statements as Bossuet wished; he persisted in dwelling chiefly on the true doctrine of pure love, and thought a woman's theological inaccuracies of little import. Bossuet began to feel very vexed, the more that, while promising the most absolute submission (her letters are full of such expressions as "I promise neither to write or speak any more of these subjects;" "I honestly affirm that I wish my

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 563. Bossuet mentions instances of Mme. Guyon's wild ideas of her own grace and illumination sufficient to shock any sober-minded person. He cites a conversation in which he asked her, "Do you really deny that you can ask anything of God?" "I do," she replied. "You cannot offer that petition of the Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses'?" She assented. "Then," said I, "I, to whom you have submitted yourself and all that concerns you, in the right of my power, I bid you, and the Lord through me bids you, ask that grace of Him." What was her reply? "I can say the words by heart, but as to conveying any meaning to my heart, the state of *oraison pure* and gratuitous love to which I am raised does not admit of it."—*Ibid.*

fate to rest in your hands;" "I have no wish save to obey you implicitly"), Madame Guyon was acting very much otherwise. He wrote very plainly to her, but very kindly.

"One thing I must tell you," he wrote (March 4, 1694), "that first of all you need to get rid of the great ideas you have of yourself. I do not deny that one may tell things that are advantageous to one's self as well as to another, under certain circumstances, when there is need, and especially in obedience. But these I have pointed out to you are things unexampled, and *outré* beyond all measure. . . . Put away such thoughts, and carry out the resolution with which God inspires you, to retire, to write no more, not to exercise yourself in these communications of grace," (here he quotes some great extravagances,) "such as I have never heard of from any one save you. . . . I include among these all predictions, visions, miracles, and, in a word, everything extraordinary. . . .

"I could say much about your writings, which I must tell you are full of insupportable and untenable things, either in fact or in form. But I will not dwell upon these, as you consent to burn them; and as to those which are in print and cannot be destroyed, I am glad to find you submissive to whatever censure, correction and explanation may be required, 'preferring to die a thousand times or suffer all possible shame rather

than give scandal to one of the Church's little ones, or in any way impugn her holy doctrine;'—you have but to persist in such sentiments, and submit to what God teaches His Bishops and Doctors." And, after a long, most patient discussion, he adds: "I write this as in God's Sight, word for word as I believe He speaks to me through the voice of Holy Scripture and tradition, and with the fullest confidence that I am speaking the truth. Nevertheless, I give you perfect leave to explain yourself further—there may be somewhat you have not clearly unravelled, and I shall always be ready to hear it. For my own part I have purposely explained myself at length, not sparing trouble, in order to satisfy your wish to be taught. And I commend your docility, I sympathise with your crosses, and I hope God will reveal all you need to you." [1]

All the letters on this subject are interesting, but it would take volumes to quote them, and we must pass on.

Bossuet was evidently growing sore with his friend Fénelon himself, and he says that Archbishop de Harlay, "so far from judging the Abbé favourably, showed that if any opportunity of damaging him arose, he would eagerly seize upon it." [2]

Suddenly Madame Guyon changed her course, and through Madame de Maintenon appealed to the King

[1] *Lettre XII.* vol. xxviii. p. 592.

[2] *Réfut.* vol. xxviii. p. 565.

for a commission, half lay, half ecclesiastic. This was granted; only as every one concerned repudiated any idea of accusing her of moral delinquency—a point in which she persisted as the reason for giving her lay judges—the King assigned her the three clerical Commissioners for whom she asked, namely, the Bishop of Chartres, the Superior of Saint-Sulpice and the Bishop of Meaux, to investigate her doctrine thoroughly. Madame de Maintenon writes:—

"Another letter from Madame Guyon. This woman is really *bien importune;* but then indeed she is also very unfortunate! Now she begs to have M. de Chartres and the Superior of Saint-Sulpice added to M. de Meaux, to judge definitively as to the points on which her faith is accused, and she promises to obey me blindly.[1] I do not know if the King will inflict this further mortification on M. de Paris. After all, this heresy has arisen in his diocese, and it is his business to decide it before others,—and you may be sure he will not waive his rights. M. l'Abbé de Fénelon is too holy not to believe that one can love God for Himself, and too clever to believe that one can love Him amidst the most shameful vices. He has assured me that he only takes part in this matter to prevent the opinions of true *dévots* being condemned

[1] Madame Guyon seems to have had a habit of offering such promises.

inadvertently. He is not Madame Guyon's advocate, though he is her friend. He is the defender of piety and of Christian perfection;—I trust to his word, because I have known very few men as honest as he is, and you may say that I said so."

When this Commission was determined, Madame Guyon asked Bossuet to allow her to retire meanwhile to the Convent of the Visitation at Meaux, volunteering to live in absolute retreat, to accept any confessor he might assign her, and to hold no external correspondence. Bossuet was touched by her submission, and she went to Meaux early in January 1695. The Commissioners looked beyond the immediate justification or condemnation of this individual lady—they desired to put forth a clear statement as to the Church's teaching concerning these mystical doctrines which were absorbing so much attention in the religious world. Accordingly they fixed to meet at Issy, at the country-house belonging to the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, partly as a convenience to the venerable Superior, whose health was failing, and partly to keep their proceedings secret from the Archbishop of Paris, of whose strong prejudice against Madame Guyon they were conscious. The Conferences lasted six months, Bossuet's inevitable absences at Meaux, and those of le Noailles at Châlons, causing long intervals between their meetings. But meanwhile the Commis-

sioners were diligently studying the subject in hand, and reading all the mystic writers who could throw light on the subject. Fénelon was warmly interested in the proceedings. He wrote at length on the subject, sending his manuscripts by instalments to Bossuet, and his letters are most cordial and affectionate, expressing the utmost desire to agree with his elder friend, and to mould his own opinions to those of the Bishop. In one (dated Versailles, December 16, 1694), he says in reply to some observations of Bossuet's:

"Whenever you please, I will tell you as to my confessor the whole of my interior life as in a general confession. . . . I desire nothing save what I trust always to desire,—that is, to know the truth. I am a priest, I owe all to the Church, and nothing to myself or to my personal reputation. I repeat, Monseigneur, I would not remain a single moment in error through my own fault. I do not hold to my office, and I am ready to quit it, if I have become unworthy of it through my errors. I call upon you in God's Name, and by your love of truth, to tell me the truth in all its rigour. If mistaken, I will go and hide myself for the rest of my days, after abjuring and publicly retracting the false doctrine which has led me astray; but if my doctrine be innocent, do not keep me in suspense through human respect." [1]

[1] *Lettres sur le Quiétisme*, vol. xxviii. p. 627.

Bossuet's language later on, when he wrote his "Relation sur le Quiétisme,"[1] becomes bitter. He seems to forget the confidence with which Fénelon treated him, and says, "M. l'Abbé de Fénelon began to write in the greatest secresy on the subject: the papers he sent us multiplied daily.[2] . . . The lady did not let us lose sight of herself, and during the seven or eight months we spent over their serious discussion, she sent us fifteen or sixteen great *cahiers*, which I still possess, to prove the resemblance between her books and those of the Fathers, theologians, and spiritual authors; all accompanied with expressions of absolute submission."

The Conferences began with prayer, and the study ("accompanied by many a groan," Bossuet says) of the lengthy documents which kept pouring in upon the Commissioners. "We looked upon it as the greatest misfortune that Madame Guyon had the Abbé Fénelon as her defender." In truth, one is tempted to say the same now, and to wish that the noble, saintly, pure-minded Fénelon's cause had not been mingled so largely with that of a woman, who, however well-meaning and inwardly devout, certainly carried her extravagant Molinist expressions to a pitch that cannot

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xx. p. 85.

[2] The two statements in consecutive lines sound rather discrepant!

approve itself to any sober mind.[1] One almost feels like Bossuet at Issy,—overwhelmed by the profusion of documents, letters, statements, relations, counter-

[1] In her Autobiography, not to cite worse things, Madame Guyon said, "Que Dieu lui donnoit une abondance de graces dont elle crevoit au pied de la lettre : il la falloit délacer : elle n'oublie pas" (Bossuet adds, with an irresistible touch of sarcasm), "qu'une duchesse avoit une fois fait cet office. En cet état on la mettoit souvent sur son lit ; on se contentoit de demeurer assis auprès d'elle, on venait recevoir la grace dont elle était pleine, et c'étoit là le seul moyen de la soulager."—*Relation sur le Quiétisme*, *Œuvres*, vol. xx. p. 91.

She narrated her miracles, saying, "Pour les choses miraculeuses je les ai mises dans la même simplicité que le reste—la voilà prophetesse et grande faiseuse de miracles" (*ibid.* p. 93) ; and she stated that "Dieu m'a choisie en ce siècle pour détruire la raison humaine, pour établir la sagesse de Dieu par la destruction de la sagesse du monde ; il établira les cordes de son empire en moi et les nations reconnoîtront sa puissance ; son esprit sera répandu en toute chair. On chantera le Cantique de l'Agneau comme vierge, et ceux qui le chanteront seront ceux qui seront parfaitement désappropriés: *Ce que je lierai sera lié, ce que je délierai sera délié ;* je suis cette pierre fichée par la croix sainte, rejetée par les architectes."—*Ibid.* p. 97.

Bossuet tries to make it appear that Fénelon accepted all this blasphemous rhodomontade. But this is not true. He judged her extravagances with a much more favourable eye than Bossuet did, made excuses for her, and said he believed she meant well ; but he spoke of her "zèle indiscret ;" said that she was "forte ignorante ;" that she exaggerated greatly ; that he "did not wish to justify her books, but only not to condemn them so utterly as M. de Meaux condemned them ;" and "that she was mad or impious if she spoke thus of herself seriously."—*Réponse à la Relation*, vol. xx. pp. 191, 194, 217-224, etc.

relations, refutations, answers, contradictions, appeals, and what not, upon this mystical subject, which was so all-absorbing to the world, intellectual and social as well as religious, of Paris at this season. It is almost hopeless to steer through the mass, and keep a clear guiding-line as we go on.

Fénelon was not at first present at the Conferences of Issy, and the letters that he wrote to Bossuet were purely as a friend. Bossuet himself says, "We acted simply as among friends, all the more that, although we were accepted as judges, we had no authority over the Abbé de Fénelon save what he himself gave us."[1]

It was during these Conferences that Fénelon was appointed to the See of Cambrai. Madame de Maintenon greatly desired this appointment, but although Bossuet says that he "applauded it like everybody else," the bitterness of his words henceforth give one an uncomfortable feeling that he did not really rejoice in it, and that there may now have been some foundation for the imputation of jealousy which he so vehemently repudiates.

When Louis XIV. told Fénelon of the intended appointment, the latter declined it, as not wishing to give up his preceptorship. The King answered that he specially desired his grandsons to remain still

[1] *Réponse à la Relation*, vol. xx. p. 107.

under the new Archbishop's care. To this Fénelon replied that it was contrary to ecclesiastical law. "No, no," the King exclaimed, "the Canons only require nine months' residence: you need only stay three months with my grandchildren, and during the rest of the year you can overlook their education from Cambrai as well as if you were at Versailles!"

The Bishop of Chartres and Madame de Maintenon now proposed that Fénelon should join the Commission at Issy, which he accordingly did; but the other Commissioners had drawn up thirty-four Articles concerning Quietism and the "states of prayer," and merely offered them to Fénelon to sign. He stated his objections to some of the Articles, but signed them "out of deference, against his persuasion;" adding that, "subject to certain alterations, he was ready to sign them with his blood." That his personal feeling for Bossuet was quite unchanged is evident from the tone of his letters, as easy and affectionate as usual. Thus he writes from Versailles, March 27, 1695:

"There is nothing new here, save that you are missing, and that the 'philosophers'[1] feel the change. I fancy that after the festival (Easter), if fine weather comes, you will go to Germigny to enjoy the charms of spring. Tell it, I pray you, that I can never forget it, and that I hope to find myself once more within its

[1] Bossuet's literary circle was so styled.

shrubberies before I go to my Belgians, who are *extremi hominum*." [1]

The Bishops of Chartres and Meaux published these Thirty-four Articles, together with an "Ordonnance" and Pastoral Instruction, in their respective Dioceses without loss of time. Bossuet, in his Ordonnance,[2] gives a brief history of the controversy, summing up the condemnable doctrines of the "faux mystiques." Those who wish to study the question of Quietism should read these Articles.[3] No one who is familiar with Fénelon's writings can for a moment doubt the sincerity with which he subscribed the more important, *e.g.*:

"V. Every Christian, in every condition, though not actually at every moment, is bound to will, desire, and ask his eternal salvation explicitly, as a thing which God wills, and would have us will for His Glory.

"VI. God wills every Christian to ask expressly for the remission of his sins, grace to sin no more, perseverance in good, the increase of virtue, and all else that is necessary to eternal salvation.

"VII. The Christian has to contend against concupiscence in every condition, (though not always equally,) which obliges him to ask strength to withstand temptation.

[1] *Lettres*, vol. xxviii. p. 634. [2] Vol. xviii. p. 351.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 357.

"IX. It is not allowable for a Christian to be indifferent to his own salvation, or to the things pertaining thereto: holy Christian indifference refers to the concerns of this life (sin always excepted), and the dispensation of spiritual consolations or dryness.

"XVIII. Mortifications are suitable to all Christian states, and are often necessary, and to turn the faithful from them under pretext of perfection is openly to condemn S. Paul's teaching.

"XIX. Perpetual prayer does not consist in one single perpetual act uninterruptedly carried on, and which is never to be repeated, but in an habitual and perpetual disposition and preparation to do nothing which is displeasing to God, and to do everything with a view to pleasing Him.

"XXII. It is possible to become a very great saint, and to attain to Christian perfection without these extraordinary gifts of prayer."

After publishing these documents at Meaux, Bossuet returned to Paris for Fénelon's consecration. It was natural, considering their friendship and the exceeding love and veneration the younger man had for the elder, that he should desire to be consecrated by his hands, and Bossuet obviously desired it no less. This is evident from Madame de Maintenon's letters, in which it appears that a difficulty of precedence arose. The ceremony was to take place at Saint-Cyr, which is in

the Diocese of Chartres, and neither the Bishops of Chartres and Châlons or the King himself were willing to allow the Bishop of Meaux, although a senior prelate, to take the leading part in it, as consecrator. Bossuet pressed the matter, and Fénelon seconded him. Afterwards, when Bossuet had worked himself up to the extremest point of controversial bitterness, even going so far as to throw out the unworthiest suspicions of a character which he must have known and felt to be utterly above all such, and calling Fénelon "the fanatic admirer of a woman who calls herself more perfect than the Holy Virgin—the Montanus of this new Priscilla;"[1] Fénelon naturally asked how, if he had, as he said, such opinions, he could have wished to consecrate him to an important office in the Church? Bossuet himself writes: "The new Archbishop chose me to consecrate him, and two days before the ceremony, kneeling down and kissing the hand which was to perform this act, he took it to witness that he would never hold any other doctrine than mine. I may venture to say that I, in my heart, was more at his knees than he at mine. But I received this submission, as all the other like acknowledgments in his letters, as a tribute to my age, my seniority, the simplicity of my views, and the office I was about to fulfil."[2]

[1] *De la Réponse à la Relation, etc.*, vol. xx. p. 205.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. xx. p. 110.

Whatever may have been his mind afterwards, certain it is that on June 10, 1695, Fénelon was duly consecrated Archbishop of Cambrai by Bossuet, the Bishop of Châlons and the Bishop of Amiens (taking the place of M. de Chartres) assisting,—Madame de Maintenon and the new Prelate's royal pupils being present at the solemn ceremony.

Immediately after this Bossuet returned to Meaux, where Madame Guyon was still at the Visitation Convent, the nuns of which were unanimous in her praises. She there signed her submission to his Ordonnance, which, as has been said, included the Thirty-four Articles of Issy, and also a declaration to the effect that she had never had any intention to put forward anything contrary to the Church's teaching; and below the express condemnation of her books by their respective titles, Bossuet made her write, that she had not intended to put forth any of the errors explained in the Pastoral, but had always meant to write from a Catholic point of view.[1]

Fénelon naturally referred to these words as proving that, like himself, the Bishop of Meaux had acquitted Madame Guyon of evil intentions. Bossuet

[1] "Je n'ai eu aucune des erreurs expliquées dans la dite lettre pastorale, ayant toujours eu intention d'écrire dans un sens très-catholique, ne comprenant pas alors qu'on en pût donner un autre."

consented to the lady's leaving Meaux, (where she had placed herself in a sort of voluntary imprisonment, or perhaps rather retreat,) only requiring her to promise not to remain in Paris, or renew her intercourse with Court personages and others over whom she had assumed an unseemly direction, but that she would go at once, as she professed to wish, to the Eaux de Bourbon. Thereupon Madame Guyon made so sudden a departure as to bear strong resemblance to a flight, and instead of keeping her promises, she concealed herself in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, whence she made so great capital of the certificate Bossuet had given her of her submission, that Tronson and others wrote to him to express their astonishment at his facility.

And now the bitterness and personal feeling waxed daily stronger. Just while Bossuet was sorest at Madame Guyon's treachery, as he considered it, de Harlay, the Archbishop of Paris, died (August 5, 1695). There were many speculations as to his successor. Some thought that Bossuet should be the new Archbishop—others wished for Fénelon—some passed over both in favour of de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons. Madame de Maintenon, with whom practically the appointment rested, would no doubt of the three have preferred Fénelon, if her mind had not been prejudiced as to his *rapport* with Madame Guyon. She consulted Hébert, the Curé of Versailles, after-

wards Bishop of Agen—asking him what would be the line of public opinion as to the appointment? "Many think," was the reply, "that if M. de Fénelon had not been so recently placed at Cambrai, that he would have been selected, and indeed it is so much wished that the choice might fall on him, that men say the King's first favour was only the *avant-goût* of this greater one."

Madame de Maintenon interrupted him hastily, "But you know what hinders our proposing him: then come M. de Meaux and M. de Châlons—which of them would you choose?"

"The one who would refuse it," Hébert answered, —"and certainly M. de Châlons would not accept."

Upon this Madame de Maintenon wrote to the latter, saying, "If the vacant see is offered to you, will you refuse it, without taking good advice? Will you not find those who will tell you that it is well to put up with existing evils in which you have had no share, in the hope of changing them for the future? and was there ever a stronger reason for a translation than the welfare of the Church and the King's benefit? Is it lawful to prefer rest to labour, and to refuse a place which Providence offers you without any seeking on your part?"

M. de Noailles hesitated still: on August 18th Madame de Maintenon wrote again, "I partly under-

stand the importance and weight of the yoke we want to lay on you, but we must all toil—you are young and strong; it does not become me to exhort you to sacrifice your youth and health to the glory of God, the good of the Church and the King's welfare:"—and without waiting for any further consent on his part, the Bishop of Châlons was nominated Archbishop of Paris on the following day.

Bossuet's friends were unquestionably disappointed: he himself may probably have thought of the appointment, but he betrayed no sign of disappointment. Some of his friends would have liked the Archbishopric to have been offered to him, and refused! On this wish he comments as follows in a letter to one of his spiritual children, Madame d'Albert:—

"There is every prospect, I may say absolute certainty, that God, in His Mercy as much as His Justice, will leave me where I am. When you wish that preferment may be offered that I may refuse it you are merely fostering vanity. It is better to foster humility."[1] And a week later he wrote to the same from Paris, May 22, 1695:—

"You will have heard, my daughter, that the great public excitement as to the Archbishopric of this city is happily quieted by the nomination of M. de Châlons, at which I am heartily glad, not only because he is my

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxviii. p. 252.

intimate friend, but still more because of the great gain to the flock of such a pastor. So all your apprehensions are at an end. For my own part I can assure you that I never thought for a moment it would be otherwise, and that all my wishes are abundantly fulfilled. There is no longer any reason to doubt but that, as I have ever wished, I shall be buried at the feet of my saintly predecessors, while still working for the souls of the flock here committed to me."[1]

Fénelon was still on most friendly terms with Madame de Maintenon. She sent one of his letters to the Sisters of Saint-Cyr, saying, "It is not enough to preach to our daughters, we must also give them examples of perfection. So here is one from somebody who is neither suspicious or unwelcome to them." At this moment pecuniary affairs were pressing, and Louis XIV. was raising a capitation tax for the first time. With the same utter disregard for money which he always showed, Fénelon, when paying this, asked the Controller of Finance, de Pont-Chastrain, to request the King to accept in addition the whole of his salary as preceptor to the princes; and this, be it remembered, having already resigned the Abbey of Saint Valery. His opinions about Madame de Guyon did not weigh so heavily at this time with the great

[1] *Ibid.* p 255.

lady as afterwards: she writes to the new Archbishop of Paris:—"I saw the Archbishop of Cambrai yesterday, who told me how much he desires to stand well with you. We talked about Madame Guyon—his mind does not change concerning her; indeed I believe he would suffer martyrdom rather than admit that he is wrong."

So far well; but the cloud was gathering and shortly to break. Fénelon was at Cambrai when the search for Madame Guyon, which Bossuet continued to press, having resulted in her discovery at a house in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, she was arrested, Dec. 24, 1695, and taken to Vincennes. Madame de Maintenon announces the fact to the Archbishop of Paris in the following note:—

"The King desires me, Monseigneur, to tell you that Madame Guyon is arrested. What will you have done with this woman, her friends, and her papers? The King will be here all this morning; write direct to him."

If the unfortunate lady whose high-flown mystic notions had caused so much dissension had been quietly housed in some religious Community, without oppression or malice, the whole matter might have died out quietly; but others were aimed at as well as her, and it was hoped that her rigid examination would inculpate greater people. The Archbishop of

Paris and Madame de Maintenon would have put a speedy and quiet end to the whole business, but Bossuet had by this time reached an exceeding point of irritation, not only with Madame Guyon, who had behaved very badly to him, but with Fénelon, who had not done so. He wrote (Jan. 1696) on the spur of the moment to Madame de Maintenon that he was "*ravi*" to hear of her arrest, and that it would heal many wounds of the Church. Madame Guyon's passion for influence and her self-conceit now threw off the restraint they had assumed before. She defended her intercourse with Père la Combe,[1] boasted of Bossuet's approbation, and put no bounds to her self-assumption and assertions that she and all her doctrines were irreproachable. Before her arrest the Bishop of Châlons had published an *Ordonnance*, condemning her books and those of la Combe, and of this Fénelon expressed his approbation to Tronson. From the time of her arrest he was most careful to avoid any step which might appear like that of a partisan, but the cabal against him was too powerful to let the matter die out, as it might have done, and he was pressed to express a personal condemnation of her.

[1] His letters to her of that previous autumn—Oct. 1695—are most objectionable, and fully justify Bossuet's orders that she should hold no communication with him. They will be found in the 28th vol. of Bossuet's works, p. 658.

The Duc de Beauvilliers wrote to Tronson, Feb. 29, 1696:—

"I must tell you in all sincerity that it is quite clear to me that a very strong and eager cabal exists against the Archbishop of Cambrai. M. de Chartres is too good a man to be of it, but he is prejudiced and is worked upon in an underhand way. As to Madame de Maintenon, she is wholly led by what she is told, and believes that she is doing God honour by being prepared to go to the last extremity against M. de Cambrai. I foresee that he is on the verge of being removed from about the princes, as being likely to hurt them by false doctrine. If this is attempted and succeeds, my turn may very likely come; but—be it said without scandal—I must tell you honestly that, supposing M. de Cambrai's disgrace to happen, I should be easily consoled; and if you thought I should do well not to wait to be dismissed, but that I had better resign voluntarily, I should be in no wise reluctant to do so. . . .

"To return to M. de Cambrai, I should not advise him, if he would, to give a formal condemnation of Madame de Guyon's books. It would give a fine opening to the Court libertines, and tend to confirm all that is said to the prejudice of piety. What, while M. de la Reynie (*lieutenant de police*) has been questioning Madame Guyon about us all, while she is kept

in prison, and her answers carefully concealed, is M. de Cambrai to condemn books unknown in his diocese a year after MM. de Paris and de Meaux have done the like? Would it not give a handle to say that he is the accomplice of all that is imputed to the poor woman, and that out of policy and the fear of dismissal he is abjuring in haste!

"You know, Monsieur, all that I have told you as to my own conduct with respect to Madame Guyon. I have borne with everything, and still I maintain absolute silence, because I am convinced such a course to be according to God's Will. But as to M. de Cambrai I feel obliged to speak openly in his justification, and if he should be dismissed from the charge of the princes, I shall do so only the more loudly. . . . I proposed to the Bishop of Chartres that M. de Cambrai should speak out clearly on the worst propositions, and explain those which are doubtful; but he does not think that enough, and he has been over-persuaded that the good of the Church demands a formal condemnation of Madame Guyon's books."

The venerable Superior of Saint-Sulpice was able in a measure to modify the Bishop's opinions; but the stone was set rolling, and could not easily be stopped. Bossuet preached a set of public conferences at Saint-Cyr on "true and false spirituality," while the Archbishop de Noailles, Tronson, and Fénelon drew

up terms of submission for Madame Guyon to sign. When she did sign, she was allowed to go to Vaugirard, and was placed under the direction of the Curé of Saint-Sulpice. Madame de Maintenon says that Bossuet grudged the prisoner this indulgence, but that she herself wished as far as possible to abstain from harsh measures. Meanwhile her mind had been quite set against Fénelon, who has given a most open and complete statement of the difficulties of his own position in a letter to his beloved old director Tronson. In this he says, as to the condemnation of Madame Guyon's writings which he is asked to make, that if the Church puts forth a formula, he will be the first to sign it with his blood; but that as things now are, he cannot condemn her on the alleged grounds.

"Supposing her books to be still more pernicious than they are said to be, have they not been sufficiently condemned by various *ordonnances* which nobody has contradicted, and to which all her friends have submitted quietly? What more is wanted? I am not obliged to censure all the bad books which appear, especially such as are totally unknown in my diocese. Does it beseem me to go and overwhelm a poor woman, already severely handled by so many, one too whose friend I have been? As to M. de Meaux, I should be charmed to approve his book, as he desires, but I cannot honestly in all conscience do so, if he

attacks a person whom I believe to be innocent, or writings which I am bound to leave to the condemnation of others, without uselessly adding my censure. As to M. de Chartres, he is a holy prelate, a tender and firm friend, but out of excessive zeal for the Church and friendship for me, he wishes to lead me too far. I believe much the same of Madame de Maintenon :—he only can quiet her, and you only can convince him of my reasons, if they convince you yourself. There is a design to carry me on step by step, of which M. de Meaux is the acting spirit: M. de Chartres is kindled by zeal and real friendship; Madame de Maintenon is vexed and irritated against us by each fresh impression given to her; and a thousand malicious people about Court insidiously poison her against us, seeing her to be disposed that way. She and M. de Chartres are persuaded that all is lost unless I condemn both the writer and the writings. Why, the Inquisition itself would not require that! and it is what I will never do unless it were in obedience to the Church. What does it matter if I do not believe Madame Guyon either bad or mad, so long as I keep total silence towards her, and leave her to die in prison without meddling directly or indirectly in her affairs? The whole thing comes to this, that I will not speak against my conscience, or idly insult a person whom I have been led to revere as a saint, by

all I have myself seen of her. Can any one question my honesty? have I acted out of policy or dissimulation? Should I be situated as I am, if I had been influenced by human respect? . . . Pray read all this attentively, and if you will let M. de Chartres read it. Further than this I have only to leave the issue to Providence."

The Bishop of Chartres and Tronson assented to this, and decided that Fénelon's position did not require him to condemn Madame Guyon or censure her books, or endorse Bossuet's forthcoming work. They only expressed a wish that, when occasion offered, Fénelon would express it as his opinion that they deserved censure. This he promised, and kept his promise.

Madame de Maintenon, however prejudiced from without against Fénelon, still was genuinely fond of him. She wrote to him about what she called his "*aveuglement*" for Madame Guyon, and he replied at length, in the same tone as in his letter to Tronson. "I have never felt any natural inclination to her or her writings," he says; "I never found anything extraordinary in her to prejudice me in her favour. Most freely and naturally she has explained her feelings and experiences to me. I do not enter into the question of terms, which I should not defend, and which matter little in a woman, so long as their sense is Catholic. She seemed to me prone to exaggeration and wanting

in caution. . . . I think nothing of her pretended prophecies or revelations, and I should think little of her if she prized them as worth anything. . . . There is a great difference between a woman who teaches independently of the Church, and one who helps other souls by giving them advice, founded on her own experience and subject to the pastors of the Church. All Superiors of Communities ought to teach in this fashion, . . . referring all questions of doctrine to the ministers of the Church. If Madame Guyon overstepped this rule, she was inexcusable;—if she did so only through indiscreet zeal, she deserves to be charitably corrected, and it need not hinder one from thinking well of her;—if she did so obstinately and perversely, such conduct is incompatible with piety. . . . Women ought not to teach or decide authoritatively, but they may edify and advise in authorised matters. . . ."

He goes on freely and simply to tell Madame de Maintenon how he thinks she has been prejudiced against himself, adding, "Why should you close your heart to me, Madame, as if I were of another religion to your own? why fear to speak of God with me, as though you dreaded to be misled? . . . I go away with the hope that God, Who sees our hearts, will reunite them, though with a deep grief at being a cross to you. . . . Do not fear that I shall contradict M. de Meaux. I shall ever speak of him

as my master, as a very rule of faith. I am quite willing that he should be victorious and supposed to have recalled me from all manner of errors."

The forthcoming book to which Archbishop Fénelon repeatedly alludes was a work on which Bossuet had begun immediately after the Conferences of Issy. He had laboured indefatigably at it, and the result was called an "*Instruction sur les États d'Oraison*," in which the errors of modern false mystics were exposed. It is very learned and very elaborate, and the writer says, "exposes the excesses of those who misuse prayer in order, under pretext of perfection, to throw souls into mental attitudes and practices opposed to the Gospel, and to hinder the performance of various acts essential to piety and expressly commanded by God."[1] He had told Fénelon what he was doing, and invited him to examine the MS.

"Whenever you will," the answer was, "I will come to Meaux or Germigny, and spend a few days with you, in order to take whatever share in your work you choose to give me. I shall be delighted, not to give additional weight to its authority, but to bear public witness to my respect for your doctrine."

Then came Madame Guyon's arrest, and Fénelon began to find out that the approbation asked of him was practically a retractation. Accordingly he thought

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xviii. p. 367.

it well to explain himself thoroughly, to which end he drew up an exact exposition of his views concerning the Articles of Issy, which was submitted to and approved of by two of the Commissioners who drew them up, the Bishop of Chartres and Tronson.

These two men, together with the Archbishop of Paris, and the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse, met at Issy on August 2, 1696, and Fénelon read his *mémoire* to them. It is still extant, endorsed in the author's handwriting, as "Mémoire que je fis pour montrer que je ne devois pas approuver le livre de M. de Meaux, et que M. de Paris fit approuver par Madame de Maintenon." All these friends seemed agreed, and Bossuet returned Fénelon's MS. through the Duc de Chevreuse, with an explanatory letter. The same friends exacted of Fénelon that he should write and publish a full expression of his own mind, and accordingly he wrote the much-discussed book entitled "Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Intérieure."

It is difficult now to realize the storm which arose around this book, written by one of the noblest minded, most deeply religious Prelates who ever graced the Gallican Church, and examined and approved by eminent men on one side as it was, condemned so bitterly, so unrelentingly by others, until at length its supporters were almost swept away by the torrent of opinion. Bossuet, indeed, did not scruple to say

"that it compromised all religion."[1] But no impartial mind can follow the saddening maze of the controversy, or read the numerous writings it called forth, without being regretfully forced to admit that the great Bishop became a bitter partisan, and lost the power of judging fairly of one whom he learnt to detest as heartily as he once had loved him. Le Dieu even says (Oct. 29, 1701) that Bossuet represented Fénelon as seeking the Preceptorship to the Duc de Bourgogne eagerly, and fearing himself as a rival. "De là on est entré sur M. l'Abbé de Fénelon, que M. de Meaux a tranché avoir été toute sa vie un parfait hypocrite, n'agissant avec lui-même dès ces premiers temps, qu'avec finesse, dissimulation et cachoterie pour aller à ses desseins."[2]

What a lesson of the lengths to which prejudice and party spirit—his exemption from which used to be Bossuet's boast!—can lead a large, noble mind! It is impossible not to feel that there is a great amount of feeling, by no means religious, in the whole strife concerning Quietism—and that endless strings of interest—political, court, personal and selfish, etc.—are perpetually being pulled. All contemporary memoirs bring this forcibly before one. For instance, when the Chancellor d'Aguesseau gives vent to some uncharitable and incor-

[1] "Qu'il y alloit de toute la religion."
[2] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 242.

rect judgments, we are quite naturally told that they are "entirely dictated by filial piety;"[1]—the meaning of which is that M. d'Aguesseau *père* fancied that the Duc de Beauvilliers had hindered his becoming Chancellor, and so it was natural and all right that his son should malign the friends of the Duke, and take up a violent anti-Quietist cry against Fénelon! Cardinal de Bausset observes that "the unhappy divisions in religious matters, which were always mixed up with government affairs at that period, pretty well divided men into two classes, the disciples of Port-Royal and of the Jesuits;"[2] and the prejudices more or less directly arising from these classes influenced everybody and everything.

At the risk of being tedious, we must follow the immediate history of the "Maximes des Saints."

The Archbishop of Cambrai had agreed with Madame de Maintenon that it should not be published without having been previously submitted to the inspection of the Archbishop of Paris and M. Tronson.

[1] "Ce fut uniquement la piété filiale qui les dicta."

[2] *Hist. de Fénelon*, vol. ii. p. 20. The Cardinal says, "Il n'y eut pas jusqu'au célèbre La Bruyère qui ne se crût obligé d'écrire sur une question de théologie;—il avoit composé des Dialogues sur le Quiétisme. . . . La Bruyère devoit à Bossuet sa place chez le Prince de Condé, *et une juste admiration réunie à la reconnoissance, ne lui permettoit pas d'hésiter entre Bossuet et Fénelon!*" So much, alas, for the intrinsic worth of history and contemporaneous memoirs!

This was done. De Noailles thought it too long. The author cut it down, and brought back the abridged MS. to the Archbishop, who, with the Abbé de Beaufort, *Grand vicaire en chef* of the diocese, read it carefully. Fénelon left it with them, and in a letter he said, "There is no hurry, Monseigneur, about publishing it. You, better than any one, know why it was written. In absolute good faith I give it up to you, to suppress, cut short, correct, add whatever you think necessary. I wish neither to hurry nor to delay—it rests with you. As to the choice of some one to help you in the work, you know that I have given you full power over me and my book."

The Archbishop kept the manuscript for three weeks, and when returning it pointed out the pencil marks he had made at certain places, and in his presence Fénelon made whatever alterations de Noailles suggested.[1] Further, when he proposed that some technical theologian should examine the work, Fénelon eagerly assented, and himself suggested M. Pirot, a Sorbonne doctor, who was habitually an examiner of books and theses, and who had been employed by de Harlay to examine Madame Guyon,—who, moreover, was known to be devoted to Bossuet. This examination concluded by Pirot's affirmation that the book

[1] Fénelon published all these facts, which were never contradicted in any way by Cardinal de Noailles.

was "worth its weight in gold" ("*etait tout d'or*"), and the Archbishop shortly after wrote to Fénelon and to Tronson that M. Pirot was "delighted at the examination." Tronson's own criticism was that the book was "correct and useful." After all this who could wonder that Fénelon published the work in question fearlessly? But it was not to prosper. Bossuet unhesitatingly condemned it before he saw it, in a letter to the Abbé de Maulevrier; and after reading it, he wrote to the Bishop of Chartres in the bitter language of personal antagonism:—"The book makes a great noise, but I have not heard of a single person who approves of it. Some say it is badly written, others that it is much too bold—others that it is untenable—others that it is written with the greatest caution and reserve, but is rotten at the foundation—others that at a time when false mysticism is so growing an evil, nothing should be written save to condemn it, and lead the false mystic to God—others that there is so little truth in it, so much that is false and dangerous, that it cannot be too strongly opposed. I wish with all my heart that God may work it all round to His own Glory. A great deal is made of M. Tronson's opinion, but I am not sure but that what you call his *wisdom* is not over-great *ménagement*."

Truth must be told, but it is with sorrow and a sense of shame that one has to record how Bossuet went to

Louis XIV., with whom he always had such weight, and knowing that the King had no personal liking for Fénelon, warmed and irritated what might have been a negative feeling into an active dislike, by begging his pardon for not having sooner revealed to his Majesty the fanaticism of his brother Bishop. The King was given to meddle in religious matters: he had already published abroad his aversion for Quietism, and now—perhaps in his heart not sorry to go against the Prelate whose simple-hearted, pure nature could never have been easily understood by such an one as the Grand Monarque—he appeared in a new character, not altogether in keeping with his antecedents, and the young ladies and nuns of Saint-Cyr were edified by hearing the King, whose name we associate with those of less pious women, dismiss three ladies from the Community because they were contaminated with the Archbishop of Cambrai's doctrines, and indignantly declare that they should never put foot inside the place again! One of these three was Madame de Maisonfort, a particular friend and pet of Madame de Maintenon. She asked to be allowed to retire to Meaux, under Bossuet's guidance—a request which seems to infer that her Court education had not been wholly forgotten! Some very long letters from Bossuet to this lady remain, answering a series of questions from her on spiritual matters. Madame de Maisonfort

continued under Bossuet's direction as long as he lived, and after his death Fénelon asked her to let him see her correspondence with his old friend. Accordingly she put it all into his hands, and when, at his death, his papers went to Saint-Sulpice, these letters were among them. It was not till 1828 that a member of that Community published them.[1] They are very earnest, holy, and practical, and one cannot help feeling that in such matters of practical religion the two great Bishops did not really differ, as the hard world of human strifes and jealousies made them appear to do.

Madame de Maisonfort wrote her questions, and Bossuet added his answers, which are generally briefer than the queries. She describes herself in the outset as having "a timid conscience, a tendency to scruples, and a self-love which always seeks complacency in what it does, and in a certainty of effecting somewhat." Bossuet unhesitatingly replies that "passive prayer" is very useful to such characters, and illustrates his assertion by Ste. Chantal.[2]

Again the lady casts doubt upon the nature of her prayer, because of the little progress she makes in holiness, and Bossuet answers,—"The great and only proof of true prayer is a change of life. The object of prayer is not to make us spend a few hours sweetly

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii. p. 318. [2] *Ibid.* p. 321.

with God, but that our whole life may feel the effect and become better." [1]

To return to the "Maximes des Saints." It was not Bossuet alone who condemned the book, or those who were wholly led by him. M. Brisacier, an old and faithful friend of the author, writes in the strongest terms of the pain it gives him, not as himself blaming the doctrine—for of that he says not a word—but "foreseeing the dangerous consequences in which it will involve you, independently of criticism on its doctrine." He goes on to say that "prelates who cannot be suspected of prejudice, sensible ecclesiastics, zealous curés, skilful doctors, Superiors of Communities, worthy and intelligent laymen, unite in saying that you have but few partisans, and that very few people dare uphold you. Your best friends are grieved to see you embarked in such a career, whence you can scarcely come out acceptably, and into which you were not obliged to enter for the sake of God's Glory."

It is touching just at this moment, and amid the endless harass and annoyance which would have tried and irritated many men almost beyond endurance, to find Fénelon encountering, and bearing with the sweet patience which is so pre-eminently his characteristic, a serious disaster of another kind. A fire broke out

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii. p. 326.

in the Episcopal palace at Cambrai, and not only all his furniture, but, far worse, his books and papers were burnt. His friend the Abbé Langeron hastened to Versailles, meaning to break the bad news to Fénelon, and finding him talking quietly, as if nothing had happened, with some friends, the Abbé naturally supposed that the tidings had not arrived. But when he began to make them known the Archbishop calmly stopped him, saying, "I know all about it, dear Abbé; it is much better that my house should be burnt than that of some poor labourer;" and he went on with the interrupted conversation as quietly as before.[1]

It was about a month after the *Maximes* that Bossuet's "Instruction sur les États d'Oraison"[2] appeared, and though not actually by name, the Archbishop of Cambrai was vehemently condemned in it. Fénelon met the Archbishop of Paris, the Duc de Chevreuse, and Madame de Maintenon at Saint-Cyr, to discuss this attack. De Noailles, who had really reviewed and

[1] See also a letter from M. de Chanterac to Mme. de Ponthac. —*Œuvres de Bossuet*, vol. xxix. p. 140. In the same letter the Abbé says: "It is not possible for an unprejudiced person to say that this book (the "Maximes") favours the Quietists. I assure you it condemns them even more severely than Rome in the Sixty-four Propositions."

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. xviii. p. 367.

sanctioned the "Maximes," was now weakly troubled about it, seeing that public opinion was so strong against it; and Fénelon, who from first to last showed such a singularly pure, disinterested spirit of love, desiring no selfish ends, and seeking merely whatever was true and to God's Glory, decided of his own accord, under all these circumstances, to submit his book to the Pope's judgment, which accordingly he did, April 27, 1697, having obtained the approval of the King of the step he was taking. Surely now one would think Bossuet might have stayed his hand, but he continued to push his controversy, and inviting his two former colleagues again to discuss—this time, indeed, the "Maximes"—he pressed Fénelon to be present, practically endeavouring to force him to a retractation. To refuse was utterly damaging his cause at Court, as Fénelon very well knew; but, at the same time, having submitted his book to the Pope, it was contrary to all rule to accept an altogether individual judgment at the hands of his brother Bishops. He would probably have done well simply to take his stand on this ground, instead of trying to conciliate his friends, of whom the Bishop of Chartres tried him almost more by his uncertainty than Bossuet by his certain vehemence. The former wrote to him saying, —"Your book, contrary to your intention, will give strength to the Quietists, which frightens and afflicts

me more than I can say. They will go further in spite of your qualifications and formal exceptions: they will draw the strangest consequences from your words, such as your piety rejects with horror." Every time he talked with Fénelon this good Bishop was won by his holiness and the truthfulness of his explanations, and then, returning to Bossuet, he was convinced on the other side by him.[1] It was much the same with de Noailles.[2] They were both overwhelmed by Bossuet's paper on the "Maximes,"[3] which, after being promised to Fénelon confidentially, was in everybody else's hands before he ever saw it. It is very aggressive in its tone, calling the "Maximes" "a book which has scandalised the whole Church."[4] The bitter tone of these writings was not made more acceptable to Fénelon by occasional sentences such as "we feel it hard to speak thus to the dear author,"[5] and the like; while, at the same time, he was accused of insincerity and time-serving, as well as of false doc-

[1] Bossuet was always working up De Noailles. Thus, in a letter dated July 1, 1697, we find him saying: "Si vous saviez ce qu'on dit au nom de M. de Cambrai et comme on vous met en jeu, vous verriez qu'il y va de tout pour vous, pour les évêques qui ont travaillé avec vous et pour l'Église."—Vol. xxix. p. 102.

[2] Bossuet accused the Archbishop of Paris of jealousy of himself.—Vol. xxx. p. 3.

[3] *Premier Écrit, etc.*, *Œuvres*, vol. xix. p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 353 and 367.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 363.

trine and deliberate misquotation of S. Francis de Sales and others!

At last Fénelon entirely refused to enter into any conference with Bossuet, "who has solemnly said that he does not doubt the falsity of my doctrine, and holds it to be deliberately evil and untenable." He refused to take part in the conferences held by MM. de Paris and Chartres, if Bossuet was of them, on the ground that the latter had already so entirely prejudged the question, and he brought forward historical precedent to show that he was right, to which the less excited prelates would have yielded but for Bossuet's vehemence. "Do as you please," he exclaimed, "but I protest that I will raise my voice to Heaven against errors which you cannot affect to ignore. I will carry my complaint to Rome, and through the whole world, and it shall never be said that God's cause has been forsaken in so cowardly a fashion. If I am left single-handed, I will set to work."[1] Even then, after all this aggravation, Fénelon consented to confer with Bossuet, subject to three conditions, *i.e.* that there should be sundry Bishops and theologians present; that the assessors should speak in turn, and notes be made of

[1] The Abbé Philippeaux, who was a violent partisan of Bossuet and foe to Fénelon, quotes these words of the Bishop of Meaux in his *Rélation du Quiétisme*, published in 1732. See *Pièces Justificatives*, *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 238.

what was said; and lastly, that Bossuet should not arrogate to himself the office of examiner of the "Maximes" in consequence of these conferences, but that the Archbishop of Paris, Tronson, and Pirot should be the examiners, as already settled. On these conditions Bossuet refused to confer, and the whole transaction fell through!

Fénelon next asked leave of Louis XIV. to go in person to Rome and defend his own book, but the King refused, and, August 1, 1697, he received a harsh order to go to Cambrai at once, and not linger in Paris longer than was necessary to arrange his affairs. That same day he wrote to Madame de Maintenon:

"VERSAILLES, *August 1st.*

"To-morrow, Madame, I leave this in obedience to the King. I would not even pass through Paris, were I not in a difficulty as to finding some one able and willing to go to Rome for me. I return to Cambrai full of submission, zeal, gratitude, and boundless attachment to the King. My great regret is to have troubled and displeased him. No day of my life shall I omit to pray that God will fill him with His Grace. I consent to be crushed more and more:—the only thing I ask of His Majesty is that the innocent diocese of Cambrai may not suffer for the faults imputed to me. I ask but protection for my Church,

and that only so far as not to be hindered in the few good works appertaining to my office of which my present position renders me capable.

"It only remains, Madame, for me to ask your forgiveness for all the trouble I have caused you. God knows how deeply I feel it. I shall not cease to pray that He Alone may fill your heart. All my life I shall remember your former kindness as if it had not ceased, and my respectful attachment, Madame, will never be lessened."

Madame de Maintenon, prejudiced as she was, felt this letter keenly, and in her heart she was forced to do justice to the noble-minded Bishop, who, she well knew, was voluntarily sacrificing his worldly interests to his conscience. She relates herself that her health suffered from her distress, and that she told the King the reason of her indisposition. His reply was, "Well, Madame, are we to see you die because of this business?"[1]

With the appeal to Rome the worst part of Bossuet's conduct in the matter begins. On July 16, 1697, Louis XIV. wrote a letter to the Pope, dictated by Bossuet,[2] in which he strove to prejudice the cause by

[1] "Eh bien, Madame, il faudra donc que nous vous voyions mourir pour cette affaire là?"

[2] Vol. xxix. p. 117.

denouncing Fénelon's books as "very evil and very pernicious, already reprobated by many Bishops, doctors, and learned men:" and he induced the Archbishop of Paris and Bishop of Chartres to sign a declaration together with himself, which he presented to the Nuncio Delfini, in which a proposition was held up which had only originated through a printer's error, and which had been utterly disallowed by Fénelon. But the worst, and that part of the business which one's reverence for the great Bishop of Meaux makes it the most grievous to follow, was all the intriguing that went on at Rome in order to damage and blacken Fénelon's character in every available manner, and to prejudice his judges against him *coute qui coute.* Bossuet's nephew (that Abbé Bossuet whom de Maistre has characterised as "the petty nephew of a great uncle"), and the Abbé Phelippeaux[1] were on the point of

[1] Phelippeaux, who was *trésorier* of the Cathedral of Meaux, and who took an active part in these intrigues at Rome, and wrote a history of Quietism which was treated as all-authoritative while it was convenient to do so, fell into utter disgrace afterwards. He complained bitterly of Bossuet's own coldness to and neglect of him;—he quarrelled violently with the Abbé Bossuet, and abused him in the most unmeasured terms, accusing him of the very worst conduct during their Roman séjour. Cardinal de Noailles, whom he had flattered and pandered to in the Cambrai business, asked de Bissy if he had "found out Phelippeaux and his *mauvais cœur*" (LE DIEU, vol. iv. p. 17); and one can hardly look upon him as worth more than his colleague, Jacques Bossuet.

leaving Rome, where they had been on other business during the last year, when the appeal was made, and Bossuet at once ordered them to remain and overlook the proceeding. It was a step more damaging to the reputation of the Bishop of Meaux than that of the Archbishop of Cambrai. Bossuet's correspondence with his nephew is published[1]—it were better far for him had it not been.[2]

The Cardinal de Bouillon was at that time named French Ambassador at Rome. He, like the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, looked upon the whole affair as "*pas moins une intrigue de Cour qu'une querelle de religion;*" and he regretted that Fénelon should throw away his fortunes for such a cause. The Cardinal all along warned him that his book would be condemned at Rome, and he did whatever he could to lighten the blow to one whom he both loved and respected. Out of regard for his position as Ambassador, Fénelon would not hold any personal communication with the Cardinal, or take any measures that could even seem

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxix.

[2] "Vous devez commencer à parler d'une manière plus douteuse de M. de Cambrai, dont je vous écrirai plus précisément quand j'aurai eu le loisir de voir les dispositions de la Cour."—*Ibid.* p. 121.

"J'ai parlé de vous faire demeurer à Rome . . . le roi l'a fort approuvé. . . . Vous tournerez votre lettre de manière que je la puisse faire voir à Sa Majesté; vous saurez bien tourner le séjour de Rome, et me dire ce qu'il faudra à part."—p. 126.

to influence him,[1] and yet, when at length the examination began—there were sixty-four sittings of six or seven hours each, and out of the ten examiners five invariably gave a favourable vote—the Abbé Bossuet did not hesitate in his wrath to declare that they were misled by the intrigues of the Archbishop of Cambrai conducted through Cardinal Bouillon.[2]

Under his uncle's directions the Abbé Bossuet tried to hurry on the judgment;—Bossuet had made the

[1] This was not like Bossuet's instruction to his nephew, Aug. 26, 1697:—"Vous serez plus embarrassé avec le Cardinal de Bouillon: vous pouvez lui faire confidence de certaines choses, *et surtout de celles qui doivent nécessairement venir à sa connoissance!*"—p. 139.

[2] Cardinal Bouillon's own moderate impartial words might have spared him such accusations. (Cf. *Lettres*, vol. xxix. p. 69.) The Abbé Bossuet lost no opportunity of making mischief for de Bouillon or any one whom he spited. In a letter to his uncle of Sept. 16, 1698, this amiable person says: "J'ai été à Civita Vecchia visiter M. le Bailli de Noailles, qui n'a pas été fâché de me voir et de m'entretenir. Je n'ai point épargné le Cardinal de Bouillon; *je sais combien ces deux maisons se haissent.* Je l'ai comme determiné à aller informer le nouvel ambassadeur (de Monaco) des dispositions du Cardinal à son égard. . . . Encore une fois ne négligez pas de me faire recommander à M. l'Ambassadeur par des personnes de poids. Il est de la dernière conséquence pour la cause et pour votre honneur, que l'Ambassadeur me témoigne quelque consideration" (*ibid.* p. 6). Again: "J'ai vu le Cardinal Carpegna et j'ai eu une longue conférence avec lui. . . . Il comprend bien que son intérêt s'accorde en cette occasion avec sa conscience" (*ibid.* p. 14). "Il est nécessaire que j'instruise les Cardinaux" (p. 17).

King say in his letter to the Pope, "In order to bring to an end an affair which may have very serious results if it be not stopped in the beginning, I humbly request your Holiness to pronounce as speedily as possible upon this book and its doctrine :"[1]—and he continued to urge haste. But Innocent XII. replied with dignity, that inasmuch as the three French prelates had become denunciators of the Archbishop of Cambrai, and had given the greatest possible publicity to their denunciations, it was due to justice to hear no less fully the answer of the accused.

Fénelon found a good man to send as his envoy to Rome, the Abbé de Chanterac, and the contrast between his correspondence and that of the Abbé Bossuet may be exemplified by a sentence from the latter's letter to his uncle of Sept. 3, 1697 :—"So soon as he (M. de Chanterac) arrives, he shall have a spy, and we shall gain information."[2] Fénelon wrote to de Chanterac on the same day, "Think of nothing but God in the matter, dear Abbé ; I often say to Him, Lord, Thou knowest all ; Thou knowest that what I have done has not been from pride or self-seeking. If He is satisfied, we ought to be so too, whatsoever humiliation we may receive through Him."

The Abbé Bossuet kept his word, and de Chanterac

[1] *Lettres*, vol. xxix. p. 117. [2] p. 147.

was well *espionné*[1]—not as to any intrigues on his part, for even his spiteful watcher could find none, but as to every movement made on Fénelon's behalf. He did not wish to publish answers to the attacks made by his accusers, especially to the declaration of the three Bishops. Writing to de Chanterac, November 21st, he says: "I wish—call it as you will policy or simply religion—to respect my *confrères* to the end, both because of their office, and because of the King's confidence in them. . . . The chief thing is to maintain our patience, simplicity, and candour, and to explain ourselves precisely and without reserve on each article." And again, "I did not wish to print my answer because of the scandal and dishonour it might cause to my brethren. I would fain spare them, and that not out of policy as regards the Court, for I would a thousand times rather finally offend there, than remain unjustified." At length the Examiners made de Chanterac show Fénelon that it was necessary for him to bring forth his own writings, and thereupon he printed the Latin translation of the Maximes, of his Pastoral Instruction and of his answer to the Declaration. Meanwhile Bossuet's pen had been busy. The Summa Doctrina,[2] the Declaratio,[3] De Nova

[1] How would the Abbé Bossuet have fared, if a secretary of the Le Dieu genus had kept a faithful record of all *his* sayings and doings? [2] *Œuvres*, vol. xix. p. 453. [3] *Ibid.* p. 495.

Quæstione,[1] and the Quæstiuncula[2] had all been published; and in October 1697 he induced de Noailles to strike out certain expressions of kindness for Fénelon which he had inserted in his forthcoming Pastoral Instruction. But we must pass over innumerable documents and letters of great interest, and hurry through this miserable scene of strife and division among those one would fain see all fighting side by side for God, against His great enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil.

Fénelon's answers to Bossuet and the others made an immense impression on the world;—he was seen to be worthy of entering the lists of controversy with one who had long been considered in France as *facile princeps* of all such contests. Probably Bossuet had thought much the same himself. "M. de Cambrai a de l'esprit à faire peur!" he exclaimed—and he was alarmed too at hearing how equally divided the Examiners were, as also at his nephew's further information of April 1, 1698, "the Pope had said the matter was not so plain"[3]—as the intriguers were trying to make it to him. We cannot follow the contemptible meannesses of the Abbé Bossuet,—neither can we help wondering that his uncle did not burn his letters as fast as he read them, instead of letting them make such damaging history for future times!

[1] Vol. xix. p. 583. [2] p. 772. [3] Vol. xxix. p. 371.

At length the Abbé began really to fear defeat, and he urged his uncle to bring about Fénelon's public disgrace.

When Louis XIV. had dismissed Fénelon to Cambrai, August 1697, the Duc de Bourgogne had passionately demanded to retain the Preceptor he loved. The King answered coldly that "it was a matter concerning religion, which M. de Meaux understood much better than either he or his grandson;"—but he had not deprived him of the title of Preceptor. "What is the King about that he does not take the Preceptorship from M. de Cambrai?"[1] the Abbé Bossuet now wrote, May 20, 1698; "it would have a great effect, and it is time to act:" and at the same time he diligently propagated all manner of calumnies respecting Fénelon[2]—calumnies such as the Bishop of Meaux himself would never have condescended to put forth, though he allowed his contemptible tool to do so. Accordingly Bossuet pressed upon the King that the condemnation they so much desired was doubtful, and that it behoved him to do everything in his power to bring it about. Therefore, on June 2, 1698, the King dismissed the Abbés de

[1] Vol. xxix. p. 426.

[2] "L'autre jour à moi même il (Cardinal Bouillon) disoit, qu'il étoit fâcheux de voir de grands hommes ainsi se déchirer, je lui dis que je ne savois pas si M. de Cambrai étoit un grand homme, mais qu'il étoit un grand menteur!"—Vol. xxx. p. 22.

Beaumont and de Langeron, MM. Dupuy and Leschelles, who had all been about the Duc de Bourgogne for the last nine years, solely because they had been appointed by Fénelon. Fleury would have shared their disgrace, for he too had been placed in his office by Fénelon, but Bossuet, feeling perhaps that his own good name would suffer more than Fénelon's by such oppression,[1] made capital of saving Fleury from the general disgrace of the Archbishop's friends.

"You could not send us better or more persuasive news," Phelippeaux wrote to Bossuet (June 24th), "than that of the disgrace of M. de Cambrai's relations and friends;"[2] and the Abbé Bossuet wrote to urge that the young princes' confessor, Père Valois, should also be dismissed.[3] This stroke of policy, however, was not so successful as the intriguers expected. The Pope thought the steps taken in Paris harsh and unjust. "*Expulerunt nepotem, expulerunt consanguinem, expulerunt amicos!*"[4] he exclaimed several

[1] "Le roi s'est clairement déclaré touchant le préceptoriat," Bossuet wrote to his nephew (June 8, 1698), "puisqu'il a renvoyé les subalternes. . . Cela fut fait Mardi matin. . . Je ne doute pas après cela qu'on ne nomme bientôt un précepteur, *et que la foudre* ne suive de près l'éclair : on verra par là comment le roi et la Cour reviennent pour M. de Cambrai."—Vol. xxix. p. 439.

[2] Vol. xxix. p. 452. [3] p. 490.

[4] "They have driven out his nephew, his relations, his friends!"

times in astonishment; and the Examiners who were favourable to Fénelon were distinctly disgusted at the mean persecuting spirit shown towards him. At the same time Fénelon's brother, an *exempt des gardes-du-corps*, was cashiered, solely because he was the Archbishop's brother.[1] The Abbé Bossuet, more alarmed than ever, worked upon his uncle in every possible way, and in the summer of the year 1698, the Bishop of Meaux published his "Rélation sur le Quiétisme"[2] in which the attack upon his former friend becomes acutely personal.[3] In France, for the moment, it worked the desired effect. Madame de Maintenon wrote to de Noailles: "M. de Meaux's book makes a great commotion here,—nothing else is talked about. Everybody can understand the facts, and Madame Guyon's follies amuse the world:—the book is

[1] GUETTÉE, Introduction, vol. i. p. clvii.

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. xx. p. 85. Lachat gives the date late in the year as its publication by Anisson, but it must actually have been rather earlier, as is proved by Mme. de Maintenon's letter, dated June 29, 1698.

[3] Bossuet says, writing to his nephew, September 14, 1698, "Je réponds sur la *Rélation*, non pas tant pour soutenir les faits . . . que pour faire voir le mauvais caractère de l'homme!" (vol. xxx. p. 1). And: "M. de Cambrai et ses affidés se fient aux mensonges et aux tours d'esprit." "M. de Cambrai est un homme sans mesure, qui donne tout à l'esprit, à la subtilité et à l'invention; qui a voulu tout gouverner, et même l'État, par la direction, ou rampant, ou insolent outre mesure."—*Ibid.* p. 2.

short, lively, and telling, everybody lends it about, snatches it one from another, devours it. It has roused the King's anger that we ever should have let him make such an Archbishop, and he has reproached me bitterly. All the odium of this business falls on me."

Bossuet made a formal ceremony of presenting his book to the King when the Court was assembled at Marly,[1] and Madame de Maintenon seems to have gone out of her way to do the honours of the "Relation." It arrived at Rome just when the Abbé Bossuet's calumnies and treacherous half-confidences were doing their best to convey the most disastrous impression of Madame Guyon's character and of Fénelon's connexion with her. One must read through all that mean, dirty correspondence to believe that a man of education, a priest, and one professing to be religious, could be so far led away by partisanship and jealousy as to condescend to such intrigues

[1] "Vous ne sauriez croire le prodigieux effet que fait ici et à Paris ma *Rélation sur le Quiétisme*. Vous pouvez compter qu'à la Cour et à la ville M. de Cambrai est souverainement decrié. . . . Je fus hier à Versailles, où je donnai ma Relation dans la Cour des Princes: on y frémit plus qu'ailleurs contre M. de Cambrai. . . . J'ai fait dire, autant que j'ai pu, aux amis du Cardinal de Bouillon, *qu'il ne peut mieux faire sa cour*, ni se rendre le public plus favorable, qu'en se déclarant contre le livre" (*des Maximes*).—*Bishop of Meaux to the Abbé Bossuet*, vol. xxix. p. 466.

and manœuvres to damage an Archbishop's character with the whole world.[1]

Amid the storm which raged no one remained calm and peaceful except Fénelon himself. He was reluctant even to answer the Relation, fearing that any step he took might involve the disgrace of his constant friends the Ducs de Beauvilliers and de Chevreuse, whose influence around the young Princes was a matter of still greater importance in his eyes than their own Court favour. De Beauvilliers' letters to Tronson, with whom he continued to take counsel, show that he was very nearly being dismissed, Madame de Maintenon having taken up a strong line against him. But Tronson (who from the same

[1] "M. de Cambrai commence à être connu : sa réputation est perdue, et le seroit à moins. On commence à le regarder comme un homme très dangereux ; on ne comprend pas qu'il reste précepteur ; on en est scandalisé. Si par hasard on avoit des faits particuliers de Madame Guyon, de M. de Cambrai et de la cabale, qu'on ne voulût pas publier, il faudroit les montrer à M. le Nonce, et me les envoyer seulement pour le Pape, à qui j'ai un canal sûr pour les faire voir, que personne ne sait, et qui est excellent, et qui fortifiera le Pape *qui en a toujours besoin*, et sur qui cela fait un terrible effet."—*Abbé Bossuet à son Oncle*, June 10, 1698, vol. xxix. p. 441.

"On m'a dit que les amis de M. de Cambrai avoient voulu insinuer au Pape de consulter, sur la doctrine de l'amour pur, les facultés de Douai et de Louvain. Je doute qu'on l'ait fait ; *mais il faut être toujours sur ses gardes*. . . . La Relation ne saurait venir trop tôt. Il faut continuer à presser du côté de la Cour."—*Ibid.* June 24, p. 456.

point of view as Fénelon, thought it most important to keep de Beauvilliers about the Princes) advised him to do all he could *salva conscientia*, and suggested a sort of declaration which, while it did not compromise de Beauvilliers, might satisfy the Court. Fortunately de Noailles (who but for Bossuet would never have gone the lengths he did in this matter) helped to smooth matters with Madame de Maintenon—but he was afraid to let Bossuet know what he had done, and carefully kept his own secret.

De Chanterac insisted on Fénelon's replying to the Relation. "M. de Meaux' agents," he wrote, "are working upon men's minds continually by promising fresh confessions of Madame Guyon's, and fresh disclosures of her abominations; and they set about that they have in their hands quantities of original letters from you to her, which they withhold up to the last extremity in order to save your reputation. . . . I only tell you all this in order to prove to you the absolutely imperative necessity of answering quickly and publicly to all these things, putting them in so clear a light that there can be no room for confounding you with Madame Guyon, and letting the gross injustice of your opponents be seen, who are trying to throw suspicion on your reputation, so as to strengthen their attacks on your doctrine. All your friends, indeed all the friends of true religion, are troubled

at your delay in printing your answer. It involves everything for you and for true doctrine—your faith, your reputation, and the honour of your ministry."

Fénelon was convinced; but the publication of his writings was a less easy matter than that of his enemy's books. He could not print them in Paris, and he did not like to send them to Holland, where works that could not be published in France were often printed. It ended in his answers being published at Lyons, often without any proper person to correct proofs, although a slight error of the press might be of immense importance. He received the Relation on July 8th, and by August 30th his answer was published and received at Rome.[1] Sending it to de Chanterac, he says, "I have tried to write it in all sincerity, and

[1] August 26th, the Abbé Bossuet wrote, "On commence à faire voir ici en secret la Réponse à la Relation du Quiétisme : elle est très-sûrement arrivée, imprimée en Français. Je ne sache pas qu'on l'ait encore donnée à aucun Cardinal, et je doute qu'on la distribue. . . . On ne l'a donnée qu'à des gens affidés, qui la lisent, et font lire, et on ne la laissera à personne. Vous croyez bien que je ferai l'impossible pour la lire, et pour vous l'envoyer. . . . On m'a dit seulement que la Réponse étoit très foible, quoique les Jésuites disent qu'elle vous accable."—Vol. xxxix. p. 556.

Then follows a long account of an interview with His Holiness, in which the amiable Abbé Bossuet did his best to work upon the Pope's feelings, fears or prejudices. On September 2nd the same person writes again to his uncle: "M. de Chanterac reçut le 27 du mois passé, par un courrier extraordinaire venu en droiture de Cambrai. . . . Une heure après, il en porta un

you may notice that my chief proofs are taken from M. de Meaux' own Relation."

The sensation made by this "*Réponse*" was great. It was so clearly written, the narrative so full and natural, the answer to each damaging accusation so plain, and the whole style so simple and noble, that it carried conviction on its front. The concluding paragraph says: "If M. de Meaux has any further document or proof to allege against me, I intreat him not to make it a half secret, which is worse than an open publication. I conjure him to send it to Rome. Thank God, I have no fear of anything that can be communicated and judicially examined. I can only be uneasy as to vague rumours and allegations which are not investigated. If he thinks me so hypocritical and impious as to find no safety for the Church or himself without defaming me, let him use all his testimony, not in libels, but in judicial proceedings. For myself, I must here call to witness Him Whose Eyes penetrate the thickest darkness, and before Whom we shall all soon appear—He Who reads my heart knows that I hold neither to any person or any

exemplaire au Cardinal de Bouillon, et le lendemain il le distribua dans Rome."—p. 571.

So much for no one being allowed to see it! One wonders how the Cardinals and other personages tolerated the Abbé Bossuet's impertinences (see p. 567, etc.).

book; that I am bound only to Him and to His Church; that I ask continually with many a sigh before His Presence for restored peace, and an end to these days of scandal; I ask Him to restore His shepherds to their flocks, to gather them together in His fold, and to grant to M. de Meaux as many blessings as he has showered crosses upon me."

The reaction was powerful both in Paris and Rome. The Abbé de Chanterac describes how he himself had felt very much depressed "while sitting under his juniper tree," but now that the truth was known, and that Fénelon had spoken out, he was perfectly content and at rest as to the future. The Pope gave de Chanterac a very cordial reception when he took the Réponse to the Vatican, and he met with the like from all the Cardinals and most eminent ecclesiastical personages in Rome. Even de Noailles and the Bishop of Chartres, feeling that they had been led on further than they meant to go by Bossuet's urgency, would fain have drawn towards Fénelon again, but it seems as if Bossuet had discovered and hindered the intention. Meanwhile, stung at the effect on the public mind of Fénelon's Réponse, the Bishop of Meaux hastened to produce a new work, "Remarques sur la Réponse à la Relation,"[1] and to this Fénelon

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xx. p. 173. "Les Jésuites triomphent de la Réponse de M. de Cambrai à votre Relation. Ils répandent là-

replied in a pamphlet which strengthened the impression made by his first answer. The Cardinal de Bouillon unhesitatingly pronounced it "le plus grand effort de l'esprit humain." The Abbé Bossuet must have been altogether *terrassé*—and the virulence and fury of his language intensifies. On November 25th he wrote to his uncle: "His (Fénelon's) partisans make great capital of this work against you. . . . He must be followed in all his windings, and no means of escape be left him! He is a wild beast[1] who must be pursued, for the sake of truth and of the Episcopate, till he is disarmed, and put beyond the power of doing harm. . . . Did not S. Augustin pursue Julian to the death? . . . In order to deliver the Church from the greatest enemy she has ever had, I think in all conscience that neither the Bishops nor the King should give M. de Cambrai any rest. . . . It is of the very utmost consequence that you should make the Nuncio and the King understand how important it is not to let M. de Cambrai have the last word (écrire le

dessus, comme une vérité constante, que le roi est entièrement revenu pour M. de Cambrai, qu'il a reconnu les emportements des évêques, qu'il a rétabli les pensions de ce prélat, *que c'est moi qui fais courir tous les faux bruits*," *etc.*—p. 583. This last was probably true!

[1] "C'est une bête féroce qu'il faut poursuivre jusqu'à ce qu'on l'ait désarmée et mise hors d'état de faire aucun mal."—Vol. xxx. p. 113.

dernier), but go on pursuing him continually." And again: "If you do not make haste, it will all be useless."[1]

In spite of this urgent advice, Bossuet ceased from that time to urge facts: though he published some further pamphlets.[2] The Bishop of Chartres published a Pastoral Instruction in June 1698, to which Fénelon wrote a reply—and as a specimen of the annoyances and difficulties which beset him, a packet of 700 copies of this reply sent to Paris was ordered to be seized by the police. Henceforth, however, there was no further mention made of Madame Guyon or Père la Combe. The Abbé Bossuet had indefatigably worked up stories against the morality of these two persons; and, as has been said before, la Combe's letters were foolish and indiscreet. Now he was either induced to write letters which might be taken as telling against his own morals, or they were written for him. But the poor man had gone completely out of his mind during his ten years' imprisonment at Lourdes, and when he was moved to Vincennes, whence he was made to write to Madame Guyon, urging her to confess their past sins and to repent, he was so obviously mad, that Madame Guyon's worst enemies could not plead such an authority, though they seem to have persisted in believing the facts

[1] Vol. xxx. p. 10.

[2] See *Œuvres*, vol. xx.

against her,[1] and la Combe was sent to the lunatic asylum at Charenton, where he died the year following.

Bossuet tried to induce de Noailles and the Bishop of Chartres to write against Fénelon, but they utterly declined entering any more into the seemingly interminable war of words.

At length, September 25, 1698, after sixty-four sittings, at many of which the Pope himself had been present, the examination of Fénelon's book at Rome came to an end. Five of the ten Censors pronounced that the "Maximes des Saints" deserved no censure whatever:—the other five decided that it contained sundry reprehensible propositions. After all the pressure put upon Innocent XII. by the French Court, he was now obliged to refer the final decision to the congregation of Cardinals of the Santo Uffizio.

The Abbé Bossuet must have been wild with rage and despair! He immediately suggested to his uncle and de Noailles that they should get a censure of the book out first, which might influence the Cardinals. Accordingly a censure, condemning twelve propositions taken from the Maximes, subject to certain qualifications, and signed by sixty Sorbonne doctors, was published at Paris.[2] This censure was drawn up

[1] *Vie de Fénelon*, DE BAUSSET, vol. ii. p. 92.

[2] This censure is printed in *Œuvres de Bossuet*, vol. xxx. p. 61. Bossuet says of it, writing to his nephew: "La censure de nos docteurs est assurément trop foible."—*Ibid.* p. 249.

by Pirot, who had revised the book himself, and pronounced it "correct and useful, and worth its weight in gold!" De Noailles found himself in some trouble for having allowed such a dogmatic expression as this censure to have been vented concerning a matter on which judgment at Rome was pending.

Bossuet had now reached that point in his opposition to Fénelon when a man knows not how to stop, and he induced Louis XIV. to write a letter to the Pope, pleading for, almost demanding, the Archbishop's condemnation.[1] This was accompanied by a

[1] The letter was probably Bossuet's own composition. It is as follows:—

"*Dec.* 23, 1698.

"Très Saint Père,—Dans le temps que j'espérois de l'amitié et du zèle de Votre Sainteté une prompte décision sur le livre de l'Archevêque de Cambrai, je ne puis apprendre sans douleur que ce jugement, si nécessaire à la paix de l'Église, est encore retardé par les artifices de ceux qui croient trouver leur intérêt à le différer. Je vois si clairement les suites fâcheuses de ces délais, que je croirois ne pas soutenir dignement le titre de fils aîné de l'Église, si je ne réiterois les instances pressantes que j'ai faites tant de fois à Votre Sainteté, et si je ne la suppliois d'apaiser enfin les troubles que ce livre a excités dans les consciences. On ne peut attendre présentement ce repos que de la décision prononcée par le Père Commun, mais claire, nette, et qui ne puisse recevoir de fausses interprétations; telle enfin qu'il convient qu'elle soit, pour ne laisser aucun doute sur la doctrine et pour arracher entièrement la racine du mal. Je demande, Très Saint Père, cette décision à Votre Béatitude, pour le bien de l'Église, pour la tranquillité des fidèles, et pour la propre gloire de Votre Sainteté. Elle sait

very harsh letter to Cardinal Bouillon (on whom the Abbé Bossuet lavished abuse), making him almost responsible for the desired condemnation. One further stroke of vengeance remained to carry out. On Jan. 1, 1649, Louis XIV. with his own hand struck Fénelon's name from off the young princes' household, taking away his title of Preceptor, his apartments belonging to the office, and his salary. Did Louis XIV. think that the man who offered to give up that salary for the King's need four years earlier would grieve sorely over such a deprivation? The amiable Abbé de Bossuet only mourned that the Duc de Beauvilliers was not likewise dismissed, and he told his uncle that it was "very dangerous" not to get rid of him too.

The Congregation of Cardinals was working briskly, considering their dignity and their other employments. They held ten sittings between Nov. 19th and Dec. 15th, but that fidgetty torment the Abbé Bossuet was perpetually goading on the poor men, and complaining of their tardiness, worrying the Pope with his visits and impertinent suggestions and instructions, which he seems to have thought very edifying to His

combien j'y suis sensible, et combien je suis persuadé de sa tendresse paternelle. J'ajouterai à tant de grands motifs qui la doivent déterminer, la considération que je la prie de faire de mes instances et du respect filial avec lequel je suis, Très Saint Père, votre très dévot fils, LOUIS."
—Vol. xxx. p. 170.

Holiness,[1] and working like the "moles" he accuses of acting against France,[2] to undermine Fénelon, Cardinal Bouillon, and every one who clashed with his own petty interests or views. De Chanterac wrote to Fénelon, Jan. 9, 1699:—"I am told that it is impossible for Rome to resist the constant pressure made against you by the Court of France. The King urges not merely a speedy decision, but he demands in precise terms the condemnation of your book as necessary to the peace and well-being of the State. It seems at present that the majority of the Cardinals are prepared to condemn the book owing to the impression raised by the Court of France on the subject of Quietism. . . . Although the doctrine be not bad, and the expressions used are to be justified as having been employed by recognised and saintly authors, under existing circumstances it is thought that Rome will condemn the book in order to appease all this strife, and bring about peace. . . . I must own that my faith grows

[1] "Le Pape fut frappé de mes observations."—Vol. xxx. p. 12.

"Je m'apperçus que tout cet exposé faisoit grande impression sur l'esprit du Pape."—*Ibid.*

"Il est nécessaire que j'instruise les Cardinaux."—p. 17.

"Je puis assurer que le Pape prendra un bon parti si l'on ne gâte rien. *J'y aurai œil,* et presque toutes les semaines je trouverai quelque occasion de l'entretenir et de lui parler fortement."—p. 26.

[2] p. 47.

stronger at the sight of so many persons of known piety and sound doctrine, who see further than I do into our matter, and appreciate its dangers more fully, and who yet are quite unshaken in their conviction that God will never suffer pure love or perfect disinterestedness to be confused with error and illusion. Your sufferings will be blessed if they serve to defend true charity. It fills me with joy to think that in it we are united for time and for eternity."[1]

Fénelon's reply is in the same tone—calm, peaceful, loving, confident in God only—ready, "come what may, to adore, love, and bless Him Who can do all things, and for Whom I gladly bear my cross."

The Pope was greatly distracted. He could not help having the highest opinion of Fénelon, and he probably would have been glad to see him acquitted. But it was very difficult to resist the pressure put on him by Louis XIV., and to expose himself to a new collision with the Gallican Church, with whom Rome had been so recently on unsatisfactory terms. At last the Cardinals decided that there were twenty-three reprehensible propositions in the "Maximes;" but they differed as to whether these should be individually censured or only generally alluded to. This final point was left to His Holiness to determine, and, on

[1] MS. Letters, quoted by Cardinal de Bausset, *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 155.

Feb. 24, 1699, he appointed three Cardinals, Noris, Ferrari, and Albani, to draw up the decree—three able men and practical theologians. The Pope pointedly excluded Cardinal Casanati, because he was intimate with the Abbé Bossuet, and His Holiness wished every possible consideration to be shown to Fénelon. However, Cardinal Albani pressed for his colleague's participation, and Innocent yielded to him, though doubtless the Abbé thought it was his work, for he wrote to his uncle, March 1, 1699, "that his surprise and grief on hearing of this *belle affaire*" were boundless, and he went off to importune the poor Pope on the subject and tell him his duty.[1] In spite of his officious self-appointed monitor, His Holiness took a step which the indignant Abbé Bossuet charac-

[1] "Je crus devoir répresenter moi-même au Pape les inconvéniens d'une telle résolution, le tort qu'il se faisoit dans une affaire de cette importance, de ne pas appeller un ancien Cardinal, etc. . . ." The Abbé must have had a suspicion that he was not always acceptable to the Pope, for in the same letter he says, speaking of Cardinal Spada, that he "avoit peur que le Pape n'eût encore plus d'éloignement pour ce Cardinal, s'il m'avoit vu lui parler." Poor Innocent!

"On parla au Pape de tous les côtés, et quoique sa Sainteté eût répondu aux premiers qui lui parlérent du Cardinal Casanati: 'O! per questo non lo vogliamo!' néanmoins hier matin il se rendit. C'est un grand coup, dont le Cardinal de Bouillon est au déséspoir. . . . Je suis en repos depuis que je sais que le Cardinal Casanati est admis. *Tout étoit à craindre autrement.*"—Vol. xxx. p. 273.

terises as "a step which no Pope ever took before!"[1] —*i.e.*, he "sent an Assessor and a Commissary round to all the Cardinals, enjoining them to deal gently with M. de Cambrai—that is to say, to spare him in all that is not essential; in short, after a fashion which gives it to be understood that it will give His Holiness pleasure if he is not roughly handled. *Faites là-dessus toutes les réflexions que vous voudrez!*" Of course the Abbé determined to go "*à la pointe du jour de demain*" to point out to his much-perplexed Holiness how very wrong he was! "I shall see what he has got to say, and thereupon I shall speak to him appropriately, with all the due respect, in which I never have failed and never will fail. *Avec cela, tout est à craindre du Pape!*"[2] How Innocent must have longed for the whole business to be at an end, if only to get rid of his perpetual impertinent tormentor, who went on to the last, as his letters prove, the same irritating, malicious, contemptible person as at the first.

The first three Cardinals had already agreed that the decree should be in the shape of an ordinary brief, and not a bull; that it should affirm that the Pope did not intend to condemn the explanations of the author (*non intendimus improbare explicationes auctoris*), and that one point, already mentioned as arising from a

[1] "Un pas que jamais Pape n'a fait."—Vol. xxx. p. 288.
[2] p. 288.

mistake, should be spoken of as "*quam tamen propositionem negat auctor esse suam*;" and the name both of book and author were intentionally omitted. But directly that Casanati got entrance, he insisted on oversetting all these acts of justice, and when the others demurred, the Abbé Bossuet's champion positively refused to sign the decree unless he got his own way. Weary of it all, Innocent called an extraordinary Congregation of Cardinals, March 3, 1699, in which the vehemence of Casanati prevailed, and the Abbé was able to chant his pæan to his uncle: "Truth has triumphed at last. Yesterday the decree was confirmed in the presence of His Holiness, who signed it. The bull is being printed at this moment. God be praised."[1] And he goes on viciously giving all detail that can tend to throw obloquy or in any way depreciate the great, loving, patient Archbishop of Cambrai.[2] There was one bitter disappointment to be endured: the Abbé says plaintively, "To make everything complete, I must confess we lack the qualification of *heretic*." And again in the same letter he reiterates the lamentation: '*Il n'y a que l'hérétique qui manque*."[3] It was some consolation to him that

[1] p. 302.

[2] How far party bitterness led both the Bossuets can only be seen from their letters.

[3] pp. 303-4.

Casanati said it was not his fault that the thing was not better and more efficaciously done, and the Abbé cautiously adds that nothing of this sort must be told to the King, or Madame de Maintenon or M. de Paris, "et se contenter de ce qu'on a, qui au fond est suffisant."[1]

But the Abbé and his friends were not yet quite so safe as they fondly imagined. The Pope still displayed so decided a repugnance to condemn Fénelon, and was so thoroughly imbued with respect and admiration for him, and for the way in which he had met a persecution (which indeed had won him universal reverence), that a fresh plan was devised, which met his approval. Twelve canons were prepared, comprising the doctrine of the Church as opposed to Molinos and the Quietists, the promulgation of which it was thought would maintain the truth without damaging the Archbishop of Cambrai; and at the same time, his book might be simply prohibited, not condemned. The Abbé Bossuet exclaimed that all was lost, and bade his uncle urge the King of France to write to Rome in the most imperious terms as to this measure. This was done. No one familiar with the Bishop of Meaux' style can for a moment doubt that he was the author of the *Mémoire*[2] fulminated against the proposal to avoid a condemnation of Fénelon's book.

[1] p. 312.

[2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxx. p. 319. In a letter to his nephew Bossuet

"His Majesty has heard with astonishment and grief" (so it says), "that, after all his urgency, and after the many promises of His Holiness, repeated through his Nuncio, that a precise decision should cut vigorously at the root of the evil caused throughout his kingdom by the Archbishop of Cambrai's book—now when everything seemed to be concluded, and when this book is acknowledged to be full of errors by all the Cardinals and by the Pope himself, its partisans should bring forward a fresh project which would render all past deliberations useless, and renew the whole dispute." The document goes on to dissect and demolish the proposal,—winding up with a threat that if the Pontiff should actually fall into "such grievous weakness," His Majesty would "neither receive nor authorise in his kingdom anything but what he had asked, and what had been promised him,—namely, a clear and precise judgment" (*i.e.* condemnation) "of the book which has thrown his kingdom into a state of combustion." The letter winds up with the significant threat: "If His Majesty sees the matter, which he believed at an end, prolonged by wiles which he does not understand, he will know what it beseems him to do, and will take *des résolutions*

acknowledges that he wrote the letter. "Je vous envoie le mémoire que nous avons dressé, par où vous verrez les raisons dont il (le Roi) a été touché. Il lui a été donné ce matin."—p. 313.

*convenables*, although meanwhile he hopes that His Holiness will not reduce him to such grievous extremities."

However, before this piece of dictation from his "eldest son" reached Innocent XII., the matter was already decided. The Cardinals hesitated about drawing up canons, and Casanati overthrew the project, partly by threatening his colleagues with the vengeance of France, aroused by the three prelates who had so much weight in her Church and Court, and who were such determined enemies of the Archbishop of Cambrai. The Pope was sorely annoyed at the rejection of his project, but he had not courage, perhaps not power, to withstand the stream; and on Thursday, March 12, 1699, the brief of condemnation was read in the Chapel of Monte Cavallo, before the Congregation of the Santo Uffizio, and the Pope signed it. That same day it was published, and posted in the principal quarters of Rome. The courier sent by Cardinal de Bouillon to Louis with the important brief, arrived at Versailles before mid-day on March 22, and Bossuet received it a few hours later. The messenger sent by his nephew did not arrive till the following night. The Bishop of Meaux proceeded to Versailles, and concerted all further measures with the King. His own Secretary says that all the world spoke of it as "M. de Meaux having gained his suit at Rome against M. de Cambrai."

And so was accomplished the work which had lain so near the heart of the great Bishop of Meaux and of his infinitely small nephew—and the noble Fénelon was condemned. What has been the result? That while the name of the nephew is simply remembered at all by reason of the odium with which he has covered himself (his own letters are the witnesses against him, no extraneous evidence) in the matter, Bossuet, the great Bishop, has drawn around him a cloud, which his profoundest admirers must feel to be dark and gloomy;—the shadow cast over a life spent to God's Glory and the Church's service, is his bitter, unrelenting persecution of Fénelon, and the success which called forth all his triumph is the climax which draws the last remains of the sympathy of posterity from him to his victim.

To the last Bossuet was fearful lest his desired triumph should fail;—he could not disguise to himself the strong consideration in which Fénelon was held. On March 16, he wrote petulantly to his nephew: "For my part I cannot understand the indulgence shown to M. de Cambrai, who seems to be looked upon as so terrible or so considerable that anything is to be risked rather than fail to stamp him as he deserves. . . . One would suppose that M. de Cambrai is the only Bishop of the Church whose wisdom and piety are to be considered! The Archbishop of Paris

seems to be reckoned as nobody, . . . though he has under him more learned men perhaps than can be found in all the rest of Christendom! . . . Why, is M. de Cambrai, who with his haughty character thinks to dazzle the world by his clever ways of excusing himself, to be preferred to him?"[1]

The tone of triumph of De Noailles and Bossuet in Paris, Phelippeaux and his colleague the Abbé Bossuet in Rome, is unseemly, to say the least;[2] though through the triumph Bossuet lets appear a desire that the condemnation had been more emphatic and humiliating:

"It is useless to talk any more about the brief," he writes, April 12. "It must be accepted as it is, and the most possible made of it.[3] We think this wiser than to begin fresh negotiations, and run the risk of perhaps seeing the judgment made less strong by striving to get it improved." Père Roslet, de Noailles'

[1] Vol. xxx. p. 315.

[2] De Noailles wrote to the Abbé Bossuet, March 24, 1699:—"Je ne ferai que me réjouir avec vous de l'heureux succés de vos travaux: je suis ravi de l'avantage que l'Église y trouve, et j'ai en même temps une fort grande joie de l'honneur qui vous en revient. En demeurera-t-on au bref, n'aurons nous point une bulle? . . . mais nous avons toujours l'essentiel, et c'est beaucoup. Je n'ai point encore vu M. de Meaux depuis cette bonne nouvelle. . . . Je finis en vous assurant Monsieur, de la part que je prends à votre joie et à votre gloire dans cette affaire," etc.—p. 337.

[3] "*Et on le fera valoir du mieux qu'il sera possible.*"—p. 374.

agent at Rome, wrote him word that he considered their success as nothing short of a miracle—adding, "C'est en vérité beaucoup que l'on ait obtenu cette decision."

It is like turning from the din and darkness of a hailstorm to the pure calm light of a summer's evening, to pass from these eager partisans to Fénelon's letters and those of his faithful friend de Chanterac. There is an absence of vituperation in the language of the latter throughout which puts him into very favourable contrast with the Abbé Bossuet. His letter to Fénelon when the last step had been taken is worthy of a faithful and devoted agent such as he was:—

"*March* 14, 1699.

"Now the time is come, Monseigneur, to practise all which religion has taught you as most holy and in perfect conformity to the Will of God. Now is the time, if I may presume to say so, both for yourself and for all belonging to you, to be obedient to Jesus Christ unto death, to the death of the Cross, so that they who live should no longer live unto themselves. You will stand in need of all your piety and all the submission which you have so often promised to the Pope in your letters, now to possess your soul in patience, when you read the brief which he has published against your book. It were useless to

detail various circumstances which have accompanied this decision, and which would only make it more painful to you. The zeal of some individuals went so far as to make them think they were doing service to God by striving to obtain harsher and more emphatic verdicts against you, and the Pope felt that he was doing much in your behalf by resisting them. It was thought well that I should see him, both to assure him of your submission to his judgment and of other things. What a difference there is between what he said in private and what his brief sets forth to the public!

"Not all of us together appear so grieved as he alone does at the pain you must feel at his judgment; he looks so ill you would scarce know him. He repeated several times that he knew you to be a great Archbishop, very pious, very holy, very learned: *piissimo, santissimo, dottissimo;*—they were his words, for he spoke Italian. I will not tell you what I said in reply.

"All your friends, Monseigneur, think that you should receive this brief with perfect submission, simply and sincerely as you have promised to do; and they are convinced that the more simple that submission is seen to be, the more acceptable it will be in the eyes of God and man. One would imagine that our Lord designs you to edify the whole Church by your submission, as

much as some would fain make out that you have scandalised it by your book. Your example will give a higher idea of the perfection of Christian virtue than all the holiest religious utterances you could pronounce. I have not hesitated to affirm that you will fulfil all your promises thoroughly, because I have never been able to forget the touching words I have repeatedly heard you say—'I think nothing of myself or my book;' and I know how you have striven throughout to look to the Author and Finisher of the faith, Who, solely in order to give God Glory, bore His Cross, despising the shame. At the present moment, Monseigneur, it seems to me that Jesus Christ nailed to the Cross, exposed to the judgment of men, and forsaken of His Father, is the Example set before you for imitation, the mind which the Holy Spirit would form in you. It is chiefly in such circumstances as those in which Providence now places you that the just man lives by faith, and wherein we need to be rooted and built up in the Love of Jesus Christ. Who can separate us from that? I never felt so closely bound to you for all eternity. I feel very near to you, and it is a consolation to me to abide firmly and calmly at the foot of your cross, and thus give public token of the confidence I have always had in your piety."[1]

[1] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 171.

De Chanterac was not the first to convey the blow to Fénelon. His brother travelled at once as fast as he could go by post with the tidings, and reached Cambrai on the festival of the Annunciation, just as Fénelon was about to preach in his cathedral. It was not possible for any one possessed of human feelings and susceptibilities, however saintly, to receive such tidings wholly unmoved, but with an absence of self-seeking and pride in beautiful harmony with his usual character, the Archbishop only paused for a few moments of recollection, and then proceeded to preach, changing the plan of his sermon, and preaching on the subject of entire submission to authority. His calmness and grand simplicity riveted his congregation, and tears of sympathy, mingled with admiration and veneration, fell fast from many eyes.[1]

The Archbishop kept all his promises of submission to the full. He wrote at once to de Chanterac to say that he only waited to receive the bull in order to make his act of submission, which he would try to frame as simply and briefly as possible. "The cus-

[1] One would have liked Bossuet, to whose ears these facts travelled, to have repeated them after a more generous fashion. He says, in a letter to his nephew from Versailles, March 30, 1699: "Il a appris sa condemnation le 25, deux heures avant le sermon qu'il devoit faire, et il a tourné son sermon, sans rien spécifier, sur la soumission aveugle qui etoit due aux Supérieurs et aux ordres de la Providence."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxx. p. 348.

tom of France—any violation of which would be treated as an unpardonable crime—will not allow me to publish my submission until the brief has been registered by parliament. In this and in all my proceedings I wish to show what I sincerely feel, namely, that I have no resentment in my heart, but a sincere respect for the Holy See, and an unrestricted submission to its judgment, however rigorous that may seem. My intention is (1) to give sincere submission to Rome from purely religious motives; (2) not to think of taking any steps in consequence; (3) earnestly to seek not to offend the King any further, and to take no measures which can make him suspicious of me; (4) to give every possible proof that I feel no wounded pride or resentment towards my opponents, yet without ever allowing any doubt as to the purity of my opinions in order to conciliate them, on which point I can allow no manner of negotiation. Short of that I am ready to meet them half-way without any repugnance, and in the most humble and pacific spirit."

While Bossuet and his party were affecting to suppose that the Archbishop of Cambrai would try to elude his sentence, Fénelon was only hastening the process of cheerfully accepting it. He wrote to de Barbezieux, the Secretary of State, to know whether the King would permit him to acknowledge the brief before it was registered by parliament? It was not

till the end of a week that he received the ungracious answer that the King said "he could not too soon make an end of the disagreeable business alluded to." Even before this Fénelon had privately expressed his sincere submission to the Pope through de Chanterac, and his manly simplicity and absence of self-consciousness won him the hearts of all capable of appreciating such rare qualities. His Suffragan, the Bishop of Arras, wrote to express respect and sympathy, and Fénelon replied in the same tone of peaceful dignity: "My Superior, by his decision, frees my conscience; I have nothing to do but to submit, to be silent, and bear my cross. May I venture to say to you that this is a position full of comfort to an upright man, who does not cling to the world, and only wishes to look to God?" After explaining the reason of his act of submission being delayed, the Archbishop adds: "Doubtless it costs one somewhat to humble one's self, but the slightest resistance would cost me much more, and I must own I do not see any room for hesitation in such a case. One may suffer, but one cannot doubt for one moment."[1]

The act of submission was in strict accordance with these expressions, and so was his letter to the Pope. No one but a bitter partisan blinded by passion could have felt as the Abbé Bossuet affirmed he did, "not

[1] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 176.

edified, but scandalised to the last degree at the pride and venom of it."[1] Bossuet, of whom one might have expected a larger, more liberal view, writes in a hard, ungenerous tone of his defeated rival's act of submission;[2] but throughout France, Rome, and indeed Christendom, a very different view was taken, and the *mandement* has received but one verdict from posterity.[3] The Bishop of Chartres had the grace to write and express his admiration of the "humble and generous" way in which Fénelon had submitted. De Noailles kept silence, probably as usual afraid of the Bishop of Meaux, who made a sort of lame apology to the Duc de Beauvilliers for having been supposed to question the sincerity of Fénelon's submission. The Duke wrote to Fénelon conveying the message, and Fénelon answered characteristically. In his answer he says, "Sometimes I am obliged to laugh at

[1] We have nearly done with this odious man, but to the last let him convict himself: "Je vous avoue qu'au lieu d'en être édifié, j'en fus scandalisé au dernier point. Il ne me fut pas difficile d'en découvrir tout l'orgueil et tout le venin, et il me semble qu'il n'y a qu'à la lire sans passion pour en être indigné. Bien loin d'y trouver M. de Cambrai humilié, repentant, et consolé de sortir enfin de ses tenèbres pour découvrir la lumière, on y voit un homme outré de douleur, qui en fait gloire, qui se donne pour innocent. . . . On voit bien ce qu'on doit penser de sa soumission, *qui ne peut-être que forcée:* voila franchement ce que j'en pense."—*Œuvres*, vol. xxx. p. 413.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 386.

[3] See *Mémoires du Chancellier d'Aguesseau*, vol. xiii. p. 181.

the fear some zealous people testify lest I should not be able to make up my mind to submit. By such as these I am bothered by long exhortations to submission, all about the glory I shall find in humiliation, and the heroism of the act. All this is rather wearisome, and I am tempted to say to myself, What ever have I done to all these people to make them fancy that I should find it so difficult to put the authority of the Holy See before my own poor light, or prefer the peace of the Church to my book? Still, no doubt they are quite right in believing me to be full of imperfection and dislike to humble myself, and so I will readily forgive them, and even be grateful for their fears and exhortations."[1]

The Archbishop of Cambrai's act of submission was formally presented to the Pope and the Sacred College, and made a most favourable impression at Rome. The Cardinals unanimously invited the Pope to reply in honourable terms to it, and Innocent, rejoiced to be able thus to express his own feelings, commissioned Cardinal Albani to draw up a brief conveying a flattering expression of respect and esteem for Fénelon. But once again that busybody, the Abbé Bossuet, contrived to exercise his malicious energy,[2] and to frighten the timid Court of Rome as to what Louis XIV. and his powerful prelates might

[1] *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 185. [2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxx. p. 342.

do if it affronted their vengeance. While the Bossuets were thus striving to prevent any softening to the blow from Rome, Fénelon himself was actually doing the same thing! He wrote to de Chanterac "not to seek any commendations or good offices from the Pope for me. If my patience, my example, and my instructions do not uphold me with my flock, empty praises will certainly not do so. My reputation does not want a brief lauding my submission,—I do not think it is damaged among neutral parties. All this diocese seems well disposed towards me, and satisfied with what I have done. Moreover, I think that one should leave one's self in God's Hands when He sees fit to humble one; so I will not have you take the smallest step in order to obtain a brief with any kind of encomium of my submission."[1]

In another letter Fénelon says:

"My health keeps good, and my peace of mind too, amid all my troubles. Keep well, my dear Abbé; if I were to lose you my cross would be too heavy for my weakness. God knows how much I owe Him for giving you to me; you have done a hundredfold more for me than I could have ventured to expect. God has permitted us to fail, but He knows how to work out His Own Glory from our failure, and what else need we wish?"

[1] April 11, 1699.

All national formalities were carried through, the Pope's brief was duly registered, and in 1700 the Assembly of Clergy, meeting at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, referred to the subject.[1] Bossuet was chosen as president of the Commission empowered to treat of it; and, after all the bitterness and irritation of the past few years, it is consoling to find the Bishop of Meaux using more moderate language, and apparently in greater charity with his former friend. He even spoke more favourably of Madame Guyon, practically acknowledging her to be innocent, while she, poor woman, was still a prisoner in the Bastille, where she remained yet another year, after which she was released and sent to her daughter, Mme. de Vaux, who lived near Blois. There she spent the remainder of her life, without murmuring at the persecutions she had endured, or giving any fresh cause for interference with her liberty. She died at Blois, June 9, 1717.

After the Assembly little more was said or done publicly concerning the controversy which had so engrossed the world of late. There could be no ques-

[1] The Pope did finally write a brief to Fénelon—Cardinal Albani having pressed upon him the indignity of allowing himself to be snubbed and dictated to by France in such a matter—but the letter was so feeble and so watered down that, while it greatly aggravated his enemies, it would not give any very deep satisfaction to the recipient.—See De Bausset, vol. ii. p. 192. The Cardinals, with one exception, *i.e.* Casanati, expressed themselves in strong terms of sympathy and approbation for Fénelon.

tion that Fénelon, although formally defeated, was the real victor in the fray. He never spoke of himself, however, in respect of the matter save as asserting his submission, and one cannot question his entire forgiveness of any who he felt had wronged him. M. de Ramsay, as he is called—a Scotchman who lived in close intimacy with Fénelon—says that the Archbishop frequently spoke with admiration of Bossuet's great talents and his noble works. On one occasion some person showed a certain hesitation in mentioning his former rival before the Archbishop of Cambrai, who immediately expressed himself as hurt by such a reserve. "What notion can you have of me," he exclaimed, "if you are afraid to speak in my presence of a man whose genius and vast knowledge will do honour for all time to his age and his country, as well as to our profession and to all religion!"

One would so thankfully have had to record that the estrangement was blotted out, and that before the venerable Bishop of Meaux' death the two friends had been once more visibly re-united in their common love for their Lord and His Church, as in heart's forgiveness and prayer before the Altar one cannot doubt that such men really were. But there is no record of their having ever met or exchanged any kindly expressions again. Fénelon remained, immersed in the duties of his diocese, wholly estranged from Court.

Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris—who must always have felt that he had played a very weak part, not to say a treacherous one, by Fénelon—did not wish to see his influence at Court restored; and the Bishop of Chartres, who made some overtures for reconciliation through Hébert, the Curé of Versailles, did not go on with them:[1] and no sign was offered by Bossuet that can be traced, except that, after his death, Madame de Maisonfort, writing to Fénelon, says: "I used often to ask God to re-unite you, and the journey which the Abbé de Saint André made to Flanders, at M. de Meaux' request, shows the sincere desire he had for a reconciliation."[2] Saint André was one of Bossuet's ecclesiastics, and greatly in his confidence. Winslow, a converted Lutheran and a friend of Saint André's, records that, after a conversation which had taken place at Germigny in 1699, between Bossuet and the Abbé Berrier concerning Fénelon, Saint André, who had been a friend of that prelate also, offered to go to Cambrai as a mediator, but that Bossuet answered "the time had not yet come." Two months later, being in Paris, Bossuet reminded Saint André of this conversation, and asked if he remembered offering to go to Arras? The Abbé assented. "Then go now, and you will gratify me very much," Bossuet said.

[1] *Vie de Fénelon*, vol. iii. p. 5.

[2] MS. letter, quoted by Cardinal de Bausset, *Vie*, vol. ii. p. 216.

Winslow further reported that Saint André was taken ill during the journey, and so failed to see Fénelon![1]

If all this was correct, and he really had some friendly mission committed to him, it seems strange that he should not have repeated the effort during the next four years, or made it known to any one, if Bossuet's death ultimately frustrated it; and one would also think that some trace of such intention on Bossuet's part would have crept out in the very minutely detailed journals of his latter years, kept by the Abbé Le Dieu, whose only mention of Fénelon's name during the remainder of Bossuet's lifetime is in depreciation of Télémaque, which he describes Bossuet as criticising severely, and not kindly.[2]

Sorrowfully and quietly let us draw a veil over the close of this painful controversy, arising (oh, the hollowness and emptiness of human undertakings!) out of the doctrine of Pure Love!—hoping and believing that in the Unseen World, to which both Bishops have so long passed, all differences and infirmities have been blotted out, and the faults which over-eagerness and human imperfection produced are washed out for ever through the abundance of His Love, for Which, however mistakenly, both combatants intended to fight.

[1] *Hist. de Bossuet*, vol. iii. p. 350. [2] *Journal*, vol. ii. pp. 12-14.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BOSSUET AS A DIRECTOR AND SPIRITUAL GUIDE.

His Penitents—Letters to a Lady at Metz—Madame Cornuau—Direction—Retreats—Madame de Luynes and Madame d'Albert—Letters to Madame Cornuau, to Madame d'Albert, to Madame de Luynes, to Madame de Mans, to Madame de la Guillaumie, to the Ursuline Nuns at Meaux, to the Nuns of the Congregation at Coulomnier, to a Nun—Bossuet's Spiritual Correspondence generally.

AND now let us turn aside from the weary scenes of controversy and strife, in which good and earnest men have been waging war against one another instead of against the great enemy of souls whom they all desire to withstand, and, forgetting our griefs against the public controversialist and opponent of Fénelon, let us dwell awhile on the Bishop of Meaux in his less conspicuous character of a guide of souls, leading them one by one to seek their Lord and His Kingdom with as much earnestness and devotion of his great mental powers to this work as in the pulpit or amid his literary toils. We know but little from exterior

sources of Bossuet's private work. The Duc de Foix is mentioned as one of his penitents by the Abbé Le Dieu;[1] and accidental allusions imply that there were many others seeking his guidance, either because he was celebrated and fashionable, or from being really attracted by his piety. But there are few details and no names recorded, and his ordinary letters are remarkably business-like and devoid of the mixture of secular and religious matters, such as we often find in the correspondence of other eminent ecclesiastics. On the other hand, we have several collections of distinctly spiritual letters, written to persons under his guidance, in which other subjects do not intrude, and which were preserved by those to whom they were addressed as definite series of instructions.

The first of these series contains four letters addressed to a "demoiselle de Metz," whose name is not recorded, as early as 1662. The first three are upon Divine Love and its effects, the fourth is on the mystery of the Church's Unity.[2]

Another collection of letters on spiritual subjects, written to a certain Madame Cornuau, remains to us. This lady was early left a widow, with one child; she had a great desire to enter upon the religious life, but, being necessary to her son, she contented herself with retiring to la Ferté-sur-Jouarre, in the diocese of

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 93. [2] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii. p. 204.

Meaux, where, in 1681, she first became known to Bossuet, who then came to visit the Community. Mme. Cornuau has herself recorded that she was at that time suffering from great interior trials and many conscientious perplexities, and she was thankful to consult the Bishop, of whose tenderness, patience, and skilfulness in manipulating her sorrowful soul she speaks fervently.[1] "He could not have done more," she says, "for one whose birth, intellect, grasp of mind and goodness, had been worthy of his care." Sometimes she said somewhat to this effect to Bossuet, who simply silenced her, saying he "knew of nothing great in any soul save the Divine image which God had stamped upon it," and that he looked upon himself only as a channel through which God dispensed such sustenance as He saw fit to give each individual soul committed to his care.[2]

During several years Mme. Cornuau had sufficient frequent opportunity of speaking to the Bishop not to require letters, and their correspondence only began

[1] See *Lettres de la Sœur Cornuau au Cardinal de Noailles*, *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii. p. 422.

[2] Mme. Cornuau, dite Sœur de Sainte Bénigne, died at Torcy, August 27, 1708. Le Dieu, recording her death, says, "Elle a laissé une infinité de paperasses sur le sujet de feu M. Bossuet, Évêque de Meaux, autrefois son directeur, qu'elle a depuis écrites par l'ordre et le conseil de M. le Cardinal de Noailles qui lui servoit aussi présentement de directeur."—Vol. iv. p. 190.

in 1686, after a general confession she had made, which led to her wishing to have his written opinion on certain points. One is tempted sometimes to wonder at the patience with which so busy a man, occupied not only with the multifarious duties of his diocese, but with so many other pursuits, literary, controversial, and ecclesiastical, yet wrote minute criticisms and instructions for women living hidden lives, on all manner of points, which often seem merely remote or metaphysical, not to say sometimes fanciful and far-fetched.

Mme. Cornuau gives some interesting particulars respecting Bossuet's manner of direction, which seems to have been, as one would be prepared to expect, vigorous, manly, straightforward, and very decided. He knew the value of his own time, and rated it highly, as a busy man is wont to do. Yet he has been known to give up as much as three hours at a sitting to one general confession; and when Mme. Cornuau told him how certain persons had reproached her for taking up his time in guiding her—time which, they said, might have been better spent—he answered, "*Allez, ma fille!* tell them that they do not understand a pastor's duties, for one of the foremost obligations of a Bishop is the guidance of souls: it is because he cannot do everything himself that he is obliged to devolve a great deal of this work upon others, but he

ought to count himself happy when he is able to make time to be the guide of some few himself."

Mme. Cornuau once remarked that she could not think how he found time for all he had to do. "My great object," Bossuet answered, "is not to let myself get overwhelmed, not out of fearfulness, but because to be overwhelmed involves excitement and hurry, which are ill befitting the things of God. A man, especially one of my ordinary calibre, could not fulfil his duty unless he made it a rule to do each thing as it comes before him quietly and carefully, assured that God, Who lays so much work upon his feeble shoulders, will not allow him to fail in anything that is necessary; and when God's work is hindered by God's work he may be sure that all will be well."[1]

"I do not agree," he writes, "with those who disapprove of my occupying myself in direction. It is a part of my commission—all that I heed is to take suitable times for this work, so as to have enough for all my other duties; and this once said, you will hold the matter as settled."[2] And again: "You were wrong to fear wearying me. So long as I have the time I give it ungrudgingly and with pleasure. Such reserve causes many an opportunity to be lost."[3]

Mme. Cornuau must have been a trying corre-

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii., *Avertissement*, p. 432.
[2] *Ibid.*, *Lettre XIV.* p. 464. [3] *Ibid.*, *Lettre XVI.* p. 463.

spondent, for she falls back upon her scruples and minute perplexities and fears of displeasing the Bishop interminably. In one of her letters she tells him that she finds that, unless he answers a query at once, he rarely answers it at all! but the patience with which he repeats his answers is great. Sometimes the good lady's sensitiveness does meet with a rebuke—*e.g.*,

"You must learn to accept my letters rightly, for though in the main you do so, I have been sorry to see sometimes that they seem to produce a sort of discouragement, of which you yourself appear scarcely sufficiently conscious, and then you fancy that you will never correct any of your faults, and you talk of diminishing your Communions. Nothing was farther from my thoughts, and you are wrong to give way to these mistrusts. Beware of making any change or of keeping back your real mind, because your faults are set before you. Instead of being downcast at the sight of them you should set to work with fresh courage, if you wish to use my advice profitably. Again, I think you carry your fear of displeasing me too far—you misunderstand the sincerity which is due to the souls for which one is responsible: one simply tells them the plain truth without being in any sense displeased with them."[1]

Once when Mme. Cornuau had expressed herself

[1] Vol. xxvii., *Lettre LXXXVIII.*, p. 553.

strongly as to the benefit she derived from his advice, Bossuet answered, "Daughter, my words are none the better because of these results. God blesses your obedience, and He Whose representative I am makes Himself felt. Do you long and sigh after Him, for what is of man only will not reach men's hearts; but look at all I can do for you as coming from God, not from me. Let yourself be filled by His holy truth, which He imparts through His unworthy minister, whom He vouchsafes to employ in such great matters. My office makes me a canal through which His teaching flows to others; be it mine to fear lest I be nothing more! Anyhow, one must give again what one receives, and strive to keep some precious drops one's self. Ask that for me of the Heavenly Bridegroom."[1]

Sometimes his penitent could not help exclaiming at the kind tenderness with which the Bishop bore her failures and relapses; and then, she says, he would answer, "God is good—He loves and forgives you, how should I refuse to do so when He bears with me, His unworthy minister?" And if she found it very difficult to speak out things which humbled her, he would say, "Alas, my daughter! what are you afraid of? you speak to your Father and to one who is a greater sinner than you are!"

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii., *Avertissement de Mme. de Cornuau*, p. 426.

Every year Bossuet used to instruct this lady how to keep her retreat, which seems to have been made alone, and not with the Community among whom she sojourned. His plan was to ascertain what her special needs were, and what God required of her, and then to leave her very much to the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. He disapproved of too much instruction and interference with a soul in these seasons of sacred retirement, though he was quite ready to give such as was really needful, and he carefully marked out passages of Holy Scripture for meditation and study. Thus on one occasion he writes :—

"The subject of your Retreat, my daughter, might be the beauty of God's works in the seven days of creation, as put forth in the Benedicite and the Psalm 'O praise the Lord of Heaven.' Consider what God has done for man, and how He has made him an epitome of all His other works : seek to praise Him in and for all creatures by making a good use of them all, and so sanctifying them to God's Glory ;—a good use of light and darkness, good use of rain and fine weather, of storm and calm ; good use of fire and cold, good use of everything that exists, and especially of one's self, one's own eyes, tongue, hands and feet, and whole body,—and even yet more of one's soul, of one's intelligence where true light shines, of one's will where the immortal and pure love of God should ever

abide. Learn never to be put out or impatient, whatever discomfort may arise through creatures, whether it be cold or heat, or any other thing, because all such irritation is really against God, Whose Will all things work out,—'wind and storm fulfilling His Word.' Strive to fulfil it likewise, and be faithful to Him. It is hard if we use the liberty He gives us only to break loose from His laws;—the object of that liberty is to enable us to accept them the more heartily and voluntarily. Meditate all this in Jesus Christ, Whose meat was to do the Will of His Father in all things. The detail I leave you to learn from the Holy Spirit. Jesus be with you, my daughter, I bless you in His Holy Name."[1]

Another time Bossuet tells Mme. Cornuau how to read the first chapters of S. John, showing the points to be considered and their application,—*e.g.* chap. ii. to ver. 11, "Dwell upon the humiliation of the Blessed Virgin, who seems at first sight to be repulsed by her Son, but whose prayer is nevertheless granted. Strive to understand that God's repulses are often graces, and very great graces; never lose confidence; we must aspire to change our water into wine, our languor about God and all that concerns Him into a true heavenly fervour."[2]

For a Christmas Eve (1691) he points out for her

[1] *Lettre V.* p. 448. [2] *Lettre XIX.* p. 471.

meditation S. Luke ii. 34, 35; Isaiah xxviii. 16; 1 S. Peter ii. 6, 7, 8; Rom. ix. 33; and S. Matt. xi. 6, and bids her lift up her heart in the 89th Psalm.[1]

On other occasions, such as Mme. Cornuau's removal to a religious house,[2] a coming Ascensiontide,[3] etc., etc., he gives her a most carefully drawn-out scheme of Psalms and passages of Holy Scripture, together with the object and intention with which she is to say and study them.

In common with many other great minds, capable of containing many and weighty matters, Bossuet had the faculty of giving himself absolutely and with fixed attention to the one thing he had in hand, even if it seemed of less importance than those from which he turned aside; and the thoroughness with which he listened to the difficulties or confessions told to him, gave confidence to his penitents. Mme. Cornuau says that the earnestness and concentration with which he gave Absolution was specially striking, sometimes remaining for a brief space of time with his hands raised in total silence, as though his whole soul were absorbed in the greatness of the office intrusted to his ministry.

The same penitent remarks that he was untiring in his efforts for the souls of his spiritual children, study-

[1] *Lettre XXX.* p. 487. [2] *Lettre LIV.* p. 511.
[3] *Lettre LXXIV.* p. 528.

ing with the most paternal kindness all ways of comforting or helping them on in holiness; sparing no pains in teaching or writing out rules, or anything profitable; but at the same time firm, and if need be severe, though never harsh or humiliating any one unnecessarily.

"Although his guidance was generally very tender for those under him, he expected people to work themselves, and to be supple and docile to the hand that led them. He was quite ready to hear what they had to say when they found his injunctions hard, but after that he did not allow any arguing, and used gently to make people understand that they must submit, and not fancy that by dint of arguing they could change his mind, or make him give up his views, when he thought them useful to the progress of a soul. He was amazingly firm on such occasions, quite laying aside his wonted indulgence. . . . I know some persons whose guidance he gave up, though thinking highly of them, solely because they were so disposed to argue, and so tardy in obeying. And no entreaties could induce him to resume the direction of such persons. I once ventured to express my surprise at what seemed to me too severe, but the Bishop answered, 'My daughter, there is a wide difference between forgiving a personal injury and what is purely a question of direction. Direction becomes mere trifling if, out of weakness or indulgence, the director lets

himself be drawn hither and thither by those he directs, or if he puts up with their arguing and insubmission, the result of which is that they never will make any progress towards perfection. Such direction as that is sheer waste of time, and I will have nothing to do with it.' He treated scruples much in the same way, except that he was very pitiful to those who suffered from them; but he did everything that lay in his power to cure them, and his attention and vigilance to ward them off was marvellous;—he seemed able to foresee even the smallest things which tended to produce them, and if people were docile and submissive he used to root out, almost without their knowing it, a habit of mind which he considered so formidable a hindrance to the spiritual life. Sometimes he would say, 'Do you think, my daughter, that what you are doing looks like loving God? He expects something better of you, and you must do it. He bids you do it by my means, and I entreat you arouse yourself. Be brave in retracing your false steps, and go on afresh in the path of love and faithfulness which He points out to you.'"[1]

Bossuet habitually referred to S. Francis de Sales as the great teacher of those who have the responsibility of guiding souls, and declared that he always kept the Bishop of Geneva before him as his example. He

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxvii., *Avertissement*, p. 427.

had perhaps learned from that most loving of men to consider "severity and stern rebuke as less likely to reclaim sinners than kindness, and that gentleness draws more wanderers back to the fold than sharpness, which only tends to irritate them."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," he says in a letter; "and if you give advice, mind that it be not to set forth your own wisdom, but solely for your neighbour's good, saying neither more nor less than is necessary for this purpose: if you are rudely met, either be silent, or, if you must speak in order not to seem offended, speak not so as merely to relieve your feelings, but so as to calm the offender without adding anything more;—acting in short towards your neighbour in such a spirit of forgetfulness as to any humour or self-interest of your own, as may enable you to put yourself in his place, and say and do what will really help him."[1]

Bossuet did not encourage the love of ease or personal indulgence. One day he was talking to Mme. Cornuau in a small room which smoked horribly, and at last, able to bear it no longer, she asked leave to go. Bossuet looked at her in astonishment. "What is the matter?" he asked. She, no less surprised at his indifference, exclaimed, "*Eh quoi! Monseigneur,*

[1] *Lettre VII.* p. 452.

don't you see this horrible smoke?" "Ah! to be sure," he said, "the fire does smoke a good deal, but I did not notice or feel it—God is very good to me, and I mind nothing,—sun, wind or rain, it is all the same to me!"[1]

His attention to little things, or things which the world calls little (for there is nothing too little to offend or please God), was very marked in his character and comes out in his spiritual letters. He objected to hurry as much as did S. Francis de Sales. "We will do nothing hastily. Inward haste, however eager, must be kept subject to S. Paul's rule, 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.'"[2]

"God has His own chosen hours, and when He gives a number of duties to be done, He teaches us how to arrange our work."[3]

"Trust to God for the means, the opportunities and the time for fulfilling His Will, otherwise if you are always engrossed in thinking about what cannot be, you will never do what you can, and what God actually requires of you."[4]

"Sometimes by dint of doing people render themselves unfit to do anything:—whatever is excessive is indiscreet."[5]

There are also a good may letters of Bossuet's to the two daughters of the Duc de Luynes, known as

[1] p. 435. [2] p. 444. [3] p. 483. [4] p. 491. [5] p. 512.

Marie Louise de Luynes and Henriette d'Albert, two sisters of remarkable intellectual power and personal holiness. These ladies were educated at Port-Royal, where their brother, the Duc de Chevreuse (Fénelon's friend), was also the pupil of Arnauld. They were removed from Port-Royal during its troubles, and having both a marked vocation for the religious life, they went to Jouarre, already mentioned as an Abbey in the diocese of Meaux, and there they were both professed in May 1664, Bossuet preaching the sermon for Madame d'Albert's *vêture.* She became his spiritual child, and continued so to the end of her life, always loyal and faithful to him, though her aunt the Abbess, Henriette de Lorraine, set him at defiance when he became Bishop, and gave much trouble and scandal. The elder sister, Mme. de Luynes, also leant much upon Bossuet, but she was not so entirely under his direction as Madame d'Albert. After their aunt resigned the Abbey of Jouarre, Bossuet wished to see Mme. de Luynes Abbess, but Louis XIV. would not appoint her, and it was only in 1696 that she became Abbess of Torci, where her sister and Mme. Cornuau both joined her. Madame d'Albert died there somewhat suddenly three years later.

These letters, with a number written to different members of the community of Jouarre, and certain

numbers addressed to other religious, — chiefly to Madame de Beringhen, Abbess of Farmoutiers, to the Ursulines at Meaux, and a few to the congregation at Coulomniers and the Filles Charitables de la Ferté,— are what remain to us of Bossuet's spiritual correspondence. The three first-mentioned ladies were all closely united together, both at Jouarre and Torci, where Mme. Cornuau was at last enabled to take the veil.

Bossuet's letters to Madame de Maisonfort must be included in the list.

Some few extracts from Bossuet's letters to these religious may serve to illustrate the substantial, practical tone of his individual teaching.

*To Madame Cornuau, on Prayer.*

"The devotion of the present day seems to me faulty in one point, namely, that people talk too much about their prayer, and its special conditions. Instead of dwelling so much upon the various stages of prayer, it would be better simply to pray as God leads one, without fidgetting one's self to analyse and discuss so much. I see nothing tending to show that one is always in the same condition, or that there is any fixed state of prayer: the Holy Spirit one while casts the soul down, at another time lifts it up— now He seems to be leading it to perfection, and the

next moment He brings it back where it was. Our business is to conform in all such changes to His leading, and go whither He draws us.

"When thoughts offer themselves, we should use them if good, and if a truth takes possession of the mind, we must fix our heart upon it, turn it into practical resolutions, and above all pray that God Who inspires us with it would enable us to bring it to good effect.

"I think people make a great mistake in drawing so many fine distinctions concerning the Essence and Attributes of God. A prayer framed upon these definitions becomes very complex. In a word true prayer, and that which is best, lies in whatever unites us to God, whatever enables us to enjoy Him, to appreciate Him, to rejoice in His Glory, and to love Him as one's very own; so that, not satisfied with words or thoughts or affections or resolutions, one comes to a solid practice of detachment from self and from all creatures.

"Above all, it is desirable not to perplex the brain or over-excite the feelings, but to take that which comes within our spiritual grasp, and to let ourselves be drawn gently to God, without the intervention of violent efforts, which are more the work of imagination than a substantial lasting good. If we feel a sensible delight, we may take it *en passant*, and as it flows by

let one's self be drawn in the very depths of the soul into God, loving Him Himself, and not merely the pleasure we derive from Him ;—His truth more than the satisfaction with which it fills us. . . . Follow the path God opens to you without hesitation ; do not desire a higher kind of prayer in order to be more united to God, but desire a higher and closer union with Him, that He may fill and absorb you more and more, that you may be as wholly His by your own will, as you are in right of creation and redemption. . . .

"There is often a great deal of delusion in the multiplication of exterior practices; they require limits which it is not always easy to set. I think your tendency is to indulge too much in them.

"You have written down meditations for me to inspect: well, be it so for this time, but I do not think it is well to be so occupied with the thought of one's own meditations as to write them. It is well to write down the principal resolutions with a view to recollecting them, or the chief points which have touched one, so that by reading over your notes such feelings may be renewed;—but I advise you to let the past go by, for fear of being led to fancy that your thoughts are worth writing down, save for correction if they are mistaken. Otherwise pray much, without reflecting on what you say—according to S. Anthony. Above all things aim at simplicity and uprightness of

heart, which will make you right in God's Sight. Amen."[1]

"As to special religious exercises for Advent, it is a great exercise to enter into the spirit and the devotion set forth by the Church in her services, and it is better not to seek for individual practices unless special need arise;—indeed there is no practice better than conformity with the Church's intention."[2]

"With respect to prayer, I am sure the best is that wherein we give ourselves up most freely to the action of God upon the soul, and in which we try most faithfully to conform ourselves to His Will."[3]

*To Mme. de Maisonfort.*

"The great and only proof that our prayer is good is a changed life. The object of prayer is not to make us spend a few hours' comfortably with God, but that our whole life may feel the effects and be bettered by it."[4]

*Mme. de Maisonfort writes:*—"I often feel a desire to go to confession, intending after being cleansed by that sacrament to begin to lead a new life."

*Answer:*—"That is all right, but you must not rest on such intentions;—you must rest solely in God Who gives them."

[1] *Lettre II.*, vol. xxvii. p. 441.
[2] *Lettre X.* p. 458.
[3] *Lettre LXXI.* p. 526.
[4] p. 326.

"At other times I am full of trouble, and make my confession, I know not how."

*Answer:*—"Do not be perplexed by this trouble, but do your best and give yourself up to God, without dwelling so much on yourself. Repress reflections about your own perfection or imperfection. Take what God gives you, without comparing yourself with anybody else, believing every one to be above you,—not judging yourself, but content to be in God's Eyes as you really are;—and be more anxious to progress than to perceive your progress. . . . Do not long for death in itself, and because you are downhearted; but long to see Jesus Christ. It is only when we see Him that we shall love Him perfectly, and be certain to love Him for ever." [1]

*To Mme. Cornuau.*

"Preparation for death does not consist in outer things, so much as in doing and bearing God's Will." [2]

"As to its being allowable to wish to die, we must strive to say with S. Paul, 'Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon:'—it is not death we wish for, but life with Jesus Christ. His Grace drives away impatience, because it inspires submission. There is an impatience of grief which is bad, and an impatience of love which may be painful and

[1] pp. 363, 474, 376. [2] p. 555.

trying, but which is full of a hidden savour and sweetness." [1]

*To the Same.*

"I cannot go as fast as you would have me—wait till I return, and let us do nothing hastily. Interior haste, however eager, must be subject to S. Paul's rule, 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' . . . You ask for some rules of perfection;—take two from S. Paul, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' If you observe this maxim faithfully, you will never yield to your own temper or self-satisfaction, but in all you say and do you will look to whatever tends to soothe, enlighten, and edify others. Uphold yourself in this habit by another saying of S. Paul—'Jesus Christ pleased not Himself.'

"The second rule of that Apostle is, 'If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.' The fruit of this precept is not merely that we do not take offence (for assuredly he who takes offence does think himself 'something'), but further to look upon one's self as a mere nothing, as one to whom neither God nor man owe anything, and so to abide ever ready to receive, what the gratuitous kindness of the one, or the continual merciful creation of the Other, gives us. Try your

[1] p. 589.

hand at these two practices, which involve all others, and are the very height of perfection. Ask God, my daughter, that I who set them before you may learn to understand and keep them myself."[1]

*To the Same.*

"Although it is very undesirable for any, especially for women, to aim at fathoming the secret of predestination, it is well, my daughter, that you should know what you ought to believe concerning it, as the foundation of humility and Christian confidence.

"'Many are called, but few chosen.' All who are called can come if they will: free-will (*le libre arbitre*) is given them with that intent, nor is grace wanting to them, so that, if they come not, they have themselves only to thank for it; but if they come, it is thanks to the special impulse of God, Who inspires them to make so good use of their liberty. Thus they owe their faithfulness to grace to His special Goodness, which obliges them to infinite gratitude, and teaches them to say humbly, 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory?'

"All that God does in time He had foreseen and predestinated from all eternity;—thus from all eternity He foresaw and predestinated all those individual

[1] p. 444.

means by which He inspires His faithful servants with fidelity, obedience, perseverance:—and this is what we mean by predestination.

"The result of this doctrine is to make us place our wills and our liberties in God's Hands, entreating Him so to direct them that they may never go astray; thanking Him for whatever good we do; believing that it is He Who works that good in us without destroying or weakening our free will, but that, on the contrary, He raises and strengthens it, teaching us to use our own gifts well, which is above all things desirable.

"God is the Author of whatever good we do; it is He Who fulfils, as it is He who originates it. His Holy Spirit forms those prayers in our hearts which He afterwards grants. He has foreseen and predestinated all this; and this is simply what we mean by predestination. But together with all this, we must believe that no one is lost, no one is forsaken of God, or left of Him, save wholly by his own fault. If this is hard to be understood of human reason, which finds it difficult to reconcile the different sides of this holy, inviolable doctrine, faith will not fail to reconcile all, until such time as God shows it all plainly to us in its Source.

"When you ask day by day, 'Deliver us from evil,' you desire to be so delivered as to fall into it no more. So then you believe that God has sure means whereby

to prevent all your falls: you ask Him to use them, and when He grants your prayer, He does but execute that which He predestinated before all time.

"So then, 'it is neither to him that wills nor him that runs' that we owe our salvation, 'but to God that showeth mercy;' that is to say, neither our will nor our exertions are the first cause, still less the sole cause of our salvation, but rather that grace which prevents, accompanies, strengthens then to the end; but which nevertheless does not work alone, since we must be faithful to and co-operate with it, so as to be able to say with S. Paul, 'Not I, but the grace of God that is in me.'

"In order to give us this grace, and to 'gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad,' God sent His Son at the time He had determined. He did not come at the beginning, because it was needful that the sick man should know his sickness; inasmuch as the first step towards a cure is to know that one is ill, to humble one's self and wish for the physician. But the Great Physician of souls was promised from the beginning, in order that He might be longed for, and that all who desired Him, and 'saw His day' like Abraham, might be saved. As to those who neither desired nor knew Him, God left them to their own devices, and they perished in their sin. His rigid Justice to them constrains those who have experienced His Mercy to eternal gratitude.

"We must not perplex ourselves about the great number of those who perished in the ages before Jesus Christ came: let it suffice us to know that God has never left Himself without witnesses. We learn from S. Peter that all those who were destroyed by the deluge did not perish everlastingly (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20). And although this passage is obscure, we may safely believe that sundry repented while they were drowning, and that God 'reserved' them in a place of purification until the Mercy of Jesus Christ, when He 'went down and preached unto the spirits in prison,' set their captive souls free.

"But as a general rule, our business is to make use ourselves of the remedy Jesus Christ has brought us, rather than to perplex ourselves as to what will become of those who, from one cause or another, do not use it; just as in a hospital, we should think that man mad, who, when the physician brings him an infallible cure, should neglect to receive and use it, in order to cross-question the doctor as to what he is going to do with his other patients!

"The whole doctrine of predestination and grace is summed up in the Prophet's words: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy Help' (Hosea xiii. 9). So it is, and if we cannot understand how all these things work together, it is enough that God knows, and it is ours 'to believe it.' 'My secret is

Mine,' the Prophet Isaiah says;[1] how much more is God's Secret His only!

"The secret of predestination is truly the secret of God's Own hidden government, and all we can do is to cry out, 'Oh the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'

"Humble yourself beneath His All-powerful Hand. He Who hath promised is able also to perform. 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.' 'All they that hope in Thee shall not be ashamed.'"[2]

*To the Same.*

"You always come back to wanting me to burden you with practices and special means. That is not what God requires either of you or me, my daughter. Keep to what I have already enjoined; go on in faith, in confidence, and forgetfulness of self. So much talk is not necessary to lead souls in God's ways. When once things have been explained, silence is the best safeguard. . . . It is lawful to say with S. Paul, 'I have a desire to depart;' that is, to die and to be with Jesus Christ; but no one may ever rightly bring on

[1] Isaiah xxiv. 16. "Secretum Meum Mihi, secretum Meum Mihi, væ mihi," in the Vulgate. The force of the words is lost in our English Version: "My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!"

[2] p. 453.

illness or reject proper remedies. Our self-abandonment to God, as above all means, must be interior. Externally we must practise obedience; and so, as to fasting, I refer you to that. . . . I would not have you get up earlier than the rest of the Community, if by so doing you cause any disedification among the Sisters. Be steady in observing the rules I have given you as to penances and prayers; and especially as to the needful quantity of sleep, which is of the utmost importance with your tendency to excitement. Obedience, discretion, and edification are worth more than many prayers and penances. . . . It is right that you should go to bed at the appointed hour, and in order to do so, you must cut short your reading, even in the midst of a chapter or a psalm. Obedience is better than sacrifice. . . .

"Be careful to keep your rule with due regard to health, and do not urge yourself too far. This is of great consequence, because sometimes by dint of doing people render themselves incapable of doing anything. Whatever is excessive is indiscreet. Remember this as in God's Sight. . . . A great craving for austerities has become more than ever suspicious to me, since I read that S. Francis de Sales said that were he a religious he would ask for nothing of that kind beyond his rule. . . . Spend a quarter of an hour daily in meditating simply on the austere yet

loving example of Christian virtue which is set before us in the Person of Jesus Christ, lowly and humble of heart; He Who often wept, but never laughed: weep with Him, and without affecting never to laugh, be gentle, kindly, and serious."[1]

"Beware of letting yourself down in the way you speak of;—you know that God forbids it, and that He wills us to take reasonable care of our health. Was it thus that Jesus Christ fulfilled His Father's Will? Live as long as God pleases, and confess His Holy Name. What follies does the devil tempt you to? Answer, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord Thy God.' Who told you that you will find rest in death? Will it take you out of God's Hands? Live and love."[2]

*To the Same, on her desire for the Religious Life.*

"I do not forbid you—God forbid, to pray for holy religion, I would only banish anxiety, and I would not have you occupy your mind overmuch with the thought, because it would distract you from that which God requires of you at the actual moment. . . . I would forbid all disquietude. There is every appearance that God means only to give you the desire. I doubt as to your health, and should hesitate on that ground, were everything else clear . . . . These

[1] pp. 457-536. [2] p. 604.

great longings for retreat are very good, but not very practicable, and when such things are to be they come without one's making great efforts to bring them about,—which are all the result of over-anxiety. . . . If nothing comes to pass naturally and simply, I shall conclude that your longings are such as God sends to some souls as a discipline, without ever fulfilling them. I have known some very holy religious with whom He has dealt thus, some desiring greatly to become real hermits in a real desert;—others to leave their own for some more ascetic and interior Order. It has all been unfulfilled; but their desires have exercised and purified them. If, however, they had fretted themselves to bring to pass what they wished, they would have become the victims of agitation and anxiety, which would have resulted in total distraction of mind."[1]

"All that you fancy, my daughter, about your longings is unreal and impracticable. Let your desire for the religious life grow, but trust to God for all means, occasions, and seasons for accomplishing it—otherwise you will be so absorbed in what cannot be, that you will not do what you can, and what God requires of you actually at the present moment."[2]

"Sometimes God hides His Will from us, so far as even to inspire us with a desire for that which He

[1] pp. 464, 467, 476. [2] p. 491.

does not vouchsafe to accomplish. S. Paul asked to be delivered from that thorn in the flesh, which was sent to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure. Three times he asked this,—but without success—yet it was a Saint who asked. We cannot doubt that it was God Himself Who inspired him with the wish, and the Same God Who inspired the wish refused to grant it. He saw fit to leave S. Paul to this discipline. Certainly God told him what was His Will, but He does not always do that;—He often leaves us to languish in a longing which He does not see fit to accomplish. Why so? Because there is great gain in longing after that which is good, and although it is well that we should wish, God sees also gain for us in the refusal; and He wills to give the soul both benefits—that of desire and that of submission to a denial;—thus in His great liberality giving us two gains instead of one."[1]

"Be at rest, and do in your present condition whatever you would do if God had revealed to you that you were to remain in it always. Without this, you cannot arrive at any perfection."[2]

"As our Lord said, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' so I say to you, Sufficient for each hour and each moment is its own evil. It is not well to look on overmuch—we have never more than one single

[1] p. 508. [2] p. 518.

moment at our own disposal, but God is with us in every moment—it is He Who spreads one moment after another before us, and we should take each as coming from Him. If you had full contentment and ease in your present position, I should be afraid for you. It is through crosses and humiliations that you are upheld. I have but one answer to make, with S. Paul, 'God is Faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.'"[1]

"Your wishes will help you;—God will accept your sincere desires to fulfil His Will. But be sure and go through the wall where the door is open. . . . Do not look on too far. 'Sufficient unto the day.' *Allez au jour la journée*, happy in doing hour by hour whatever the Heavenly Bridegroom asks."[2]

"Do not try to do so many things to attract your Heavenly Bridegroom. Love is enough. Go your way, without turning from side to side;—think more of satisfying God than of obtaining satisfaction, and do not be always trying to know if you are pleasing in His Sight; rather do all that you know is acceptable to Him, and submit to His Will. It is not acceptable to Him when we talk a great deal about our crosses, and seek to change those He sends us. . . . You wish that when death comes you may be able to feel the confidence which now you often feel: do you

[1] p. 590. [2] p. 629.

not know that that which you are in life will set its mark upon your death? What are we all but dying people? Cannot He Who gives us that confidence now continue it? What will your soul do at its last hour but what it has been always doing? Is not our every moment in God's Hand, and is there ever one single moment which may not be that of your death? What can you do then, but let your confidence stretch over every succeeding moment as it comes, through all eternity indeed, if life could last so long?" [1]

*To the Same, on Confession.*

"Do not be troubled about your last confession, or the evils you laid before me. Put your will into God's Will. Let Him hold you;—if you do it fully and heartily He will hold you all the faster, as you seem each moment to be slipping from your own hold. I pray our Lord to be with you. I will give you some time, please God, but I know not when;—my days are so full that I am not my own master. But go on in trust, my daughter, and be faithful." [2]

"Generally speaking, after a certain time it is not well to go back over one's confessions;—it is enough to keep a general impression of the depth of one's sin. But some regard must be had in this matter to past

[1] p. 658. [2] p. 523.

experience. Nevertheless, anyhow, I would have such retrospection rare." [1]

"If our frequent faults were to keep us back from communion or prayer, we should be trusting in ourselves, not in the Goodness of God. Never hold back from meditation or communion for any cause whatever, save by your confessor's direction. Obey and strive to enter into the Mind of Jesus in communicating—His Mind of union, joy and love, of which the whole Gospel is full." [2]

"Do not be surprised at your dryness. They say that in this country the dry seasons are generally best; and so it is with our spiritual husbandry, dryness often being simply an interior concentration of God's sensible gifts. Give yourself up to His Will, do not yield to an eager desire for sensible grace,—live by faith and hope." [3]

"Do not think about whether you are esteemed or despised; whether you are thought of, what is thought, or whether you are forgotten altogether. 'My God and my all.' 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.'" [4]

*To the Same.*

"I have often told you, my daughter, that married life is holy, and the virgins who despise it are not wise

[1] p. 529. [2] p. 588. [3] p. 591. [4] p. 631.

virgins. Virginity is an angelic state, and widowhood comes very near it. . . . The Church is as a widow, and all Christian widows, who in their married life have been a type of the Church's union with Jesus Christ, are types of her widowhood through their own. The essential peculiarity of widowhood is rather distaste than contempt for the world;—a widow's outward mourning is modesty and simplicity, while within it consists in that holy 'desolateness' of which the Apostle speaks. To be desolate is to be alone; desolation springs from solitude; a soul is lonely because it has nothing on earth. The Church has nothing when she has not her Bridegroom. Thus all three conditions, the virgin, the wife, and the widow, are types of the Church." [1]

*To the Same.*

"Do not be fretted by your failings, they are at the root of your natural life. Vexation and anxiety are enemies to humility as much as to courage. The best remedy against temptation is never to despair of Divine Goodness, Which most certainly will not suffer us to be tempted beyond our strength.

"Your troubles concerning the faith ought to be banished by humbly repeating the Apostles' Creed, without any reasoning, but with simple and perfect

[1] p. 538.

submission, remembering that as you say, 'I believe in the Father,' so you say, 'I believe in the Son, I believe in the Holy Ghost.'"[1]

"You ask how to act as regards your neighbour? . . . The less we can speak of others the better, but as it is impossible for men not to speak of men, it is difficult to keep a due midway course. Charity of heart will be your best external rule. I do not think these vexations against others are natural to you, but still try to still them, lest they should take hold of you. The way to still them is to creep into the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, and unite yourself to the love He bears to every member of His Body, and thus you will be in charity with all."[2]

"What you want, in order to profit by humiliation, is not to be devoid of sensitiveness,—quite the contrary, for then you would not feel humiliation. What you must get rid of is a plaintive manner, and a spirit of resistance and contrariety. . . . There is often as much affectation in speaking of what is humiliating as of what exalts us in the eyes of others. The safest rule is not to speak of self at all, unless there is a real reason for doing so. One ought to wish to edify others, but without affectation,—and all is sure to be well if you keep in mind the Apostle's rule, to look not at your own things, but at those of others,

[1] p. 573. [2] p. 582.

and remember that 'there is a time for all things.' . . . Let your heart and lips move freely in pious intercourse, remembering that all the beauty of goodness consists in its conformity to God's Will."[1]

*To Madame d'Albert.*

"I assure you that your last confession was good and sufficient,—another more general would be useless and dangerous. You ought not to give heed to those moods in which you fancy you have retracted your former resolutions. Whenever they arise reject the idea as a temptation, and go on your way. I forbid you to indulge disquiet as to your past confessions either now or when you are dying. It is a mere mental hindrance which interferes with more essential duties, such as self-abandonment, love of God, and confidence in His Mercy. It is a great mistake for the creature to imagine that he can quiet himself by dint of fretting over his sins. No real calm can be found save by giving himself up to the Infinite Goodness of God, putting his self-will, his salvation, his eternity, all into God's Hands, and only asking Him, for Jesus Christ's Sake, not to let him fall among those who hate, but among those who love the Lord for ever. Without such confidence there is nought

[1] p. 584.

save trouble to be found by timid or scrupulous consciences.

"Never be afraid of giving yourself up too freely to the impressions of Divine Love. Always remember that God does not draw us according to our own merits, but according to His great Goodness, and that we must not merely give way to His drawing, but follow Him with all our might, bearing in mind His words, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' Say with the Bride, 'Draw me, I will run after Thee.'"[1]

*To the Same.*

"Do not say that your condition hinders your perfection; say rather with S. Paul, 'We know that all things work together for good to those that love God,' and there is no condition which hinders us from loving Him, save that of mortal sin. Consequently there is no condition, save one of mortal sin, which, so far from being an obstacle to your good, may not work for it, together with God's Grace. So I will allow you to ask to be delivered from this present 'messenger of Satan' which buffets you, if indeed it be one, but meanwhile you must not say that it hinders you from aiming at perfection."[2]

[1] Vol. xxvii. p. 36. [2] p. 43.

*To the Same.*

"It would be much better not to ask so much advice about things which you have already had decided, either actually or in similar cases. Such consultations foster scruples, and hinder more profitable things. . . . So I give you warning that this is the last time I shall answer such questions, and directly I see the sort of thing beginning in one of your letters, I shall burn it at once without reading any further;—not that I am weary of you or of directing you, but because I foresee the consequence of allowing you perpetually to bring up old troubles in a new dress. . . . You set traps for yourself, and are ingenious in making difficulties;—the liveliness of your imagination needs a check. There is no sin in these troubles unless you dwell upon them, and are too eager about remedies."[1]

*To the Same.*

"It is not true that sadness cannot come direct from God,—witness that of the Holy Human Soul of our Lord. The heaviness in which the Evangelist tells us that It was plunged was noways different from what we call sadness,—it became depression, very anguish; and was He not agitated when He exclaimed, 'My Soul is troubled, and what shall I say?

[1] pp. 48-52.

Father, save Me from this hour.' Was there not a certain anxious restlessness in the way He went three times to His disciples, and returned three times to His Father? It is true that there was no defiance;—that would not have accorded with the character of the Son of God;—but did He not take upon Him as much of human uncertainty as was consistent with that character when He said, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak:'—and again, 'My Father, if it be possible;'—and again, 'Father, if Thou be willing,'—even as though He doubted the power and willingness of His Father?

"All this teaches us that our Head bore in Himself all the weaknesses which His members were to bear, so far as the greatness of His Perfection admitted. But this was carried much farther in His servants, since Job was driven to cry out: 'I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,' and 'My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life.' And S. Paul was reduced to knowing no rest day or night; to being tried, up to his strength and beyond his strength, so as to carry 'the sentence of death' in him, looking to nothing save the Resurrection. Let us not then presume to fix any limits to the trials which God may send to His servants, but let us give ourselves up into His Hands to receive whatever marks of the Saviour's Cross He may lay upon us. It is not well to torment

ourselves with investigating whether our sadness is the result of our own weakness, or a Divine trial; for supposing it to be the first, which is the safest belief—it is none the less true that God can use it to lead us His own way as much as what comes more immediately from Himself, because He overrules alike our weakness and our evil inclinations, everything indeed, even to our sins, till they promote our salvation."[1]

*To the Same.*

"I forgive your exaggerations, which certainly did not deceive me, and God forgives you also. Do not make yourself unhappy, my daughter, but learn by your pain never to make use again of such means. . . . Jesus Christ would have us wish to be happy. He gives the desire for happiness to all, and our love is pure when we are happy through God's Happiness, loving Him more than one's self. . . . It is well sometimes to accustom souls to turn solely to God, and to find all their strength in Him only."[2]

*To the Same.*

"As to the graces one receives from God, it were a false humility and an actual ingratitude not to acknowledge them, but directly that they are recognised as graces, humility is safe. Do not trouble to decide as

[1] p. 81. [2] pp. 94, 97, 99.

to whether God only gives them to pure hearts;—He gives them to whosoever He will, He is above all rules, and moreover a great gift may be met with in a very unfaithful soul. God is not less good, and His Grace is not less grace, although man does not correspond rightly to it, and this ought to fill us with uter abasement. Nevertheless we must not receive he gift of God with mistrust, but expand our hearts in confidence, remembering what S. Paul says, 'Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.'

"Do not hesitate to communicate three time a week, without waiting to feel all this. Where spiritual hunger is felt, we ought to satisfy it, and give ourselves up to the Love of Jesus Christ."[1]

*To the Same.*

"God wills us to walk in darkness concerning our spiritual state during this life. I grant that sometines, when our heart condemns us not, we have confidence, as S. John says, but it is not every soul that is caled to this sort of confidence. Some there are that ind nought save darkness within as to their spiritual condition. Their confidence must be founded simply on the Goodness of God, and if He wills them to have any degree of assurance, He will impart it by His own secret language, not through men. Therefore I re-

[1] p. 109.

prehend absolutely all curiosity concerning your own condition,—still more as to the past than the present. All that is noways necessary, and tends to presumption and illusion. . . . I highly approve of your communicating in memory of the grace received at your First Communion. God laid the foundation of holy fear then, because He willed to build the edifice of Love upon it. I think it very right for you to communicate daily through the *Quarante Heures*, if God gives you the desire to do so. That desire is one of the best possible reasons for communicating.

"The moral assurance concerning their spiritual state which people seek is noway necessary. If God inspires the conscience with peace, and thereby seems to promise a faithful humble soul that He looks lovingly on it, we should accept the witness; but for the rest without self-introspection and in all simplicity, go on receiving the Bread of Life and the consolations of God's Holy Spirit, if possible not thinking at all of yourself, but only of His Goodness."[1]

*To the Same.*

"Pray moderate your anxiety, which runs to excess as to confession; so much sensitiveness is inconsistent with the great Goodness of God. . . . Go to Him in all confidence—open your heart, walk freely. Do

[1] pp. 117-119.

not make a torture of confession, let it be an exercise of trust and love, and therein of humility, for there can be no confidence without that. . . . You ought not to wish for anything—eithers ecstasies or marvels—nothing save to love God, but do not make a scruple about it: let it pass. Do not ask God to withdraw any of His Gifts, rather ask Him to give you the gift of using them rightly."[1]

*To the Same.*

"In the beginning of the 9th Book of S. Augustine's Confessions, there is a very striking silence. For my own part, I think the Saints said very little about these personal matters; they were kept a secret between God and their own souls. 'Enter into thy closet,' as you are told in the Gospel. One of the great faults of devotion in the present day is, that it is too self-conscious, and talks about itself too much. It is different perhaps for those whom God puts under a director, and who want to be sure of their path; but even then I am very much disposed to leave a great deal to God, and not be so much afraid of illusions. It is best to open one's heart honestly, and then to be at rest.[2] . . . Above all, do not imitate those persons who are for ever wanting to test and gauge their prayer. I do not like that way of marking everything out by

[1] pp. 135-151. [2] p. 154.

rule and line, or of laying down the law to God, dictating what He has to do at each step, and deciding that this belongs to one 'state,' and that to another. For my own part, I believe that God knows how to put very perfect souls to the mere A B C of devotion without throwing them back; and that He leads others on to perfection without ever seeming to bring them beyond the thraldom of a first beginning. He has done all things well."[1]

*To the Same.*

"There is nothing in all this business which ought to weigh upon your conscience. If you did not act with all the perfection which God required, it is because you are a weak and sinful creature, and there is nothing to be surprised at. Humble yourself; do not be discouraged, and think no more about it. If you spoke and acted at the time according to the prompting of your conscience, do not be anxious. It is the very self-love, which you dread so much, that causes this anxiety, wanting to be over-certain of having done well; but true love is content to leave all to God.

"As to talking about one's neighbours and their faults, the safe rule is never to speak of them save when it is necessary, either to establish a truth through example, or to take counsel with those able to advise

[1] p. 212.

as to the best means of correcting the faulty. . . . There is a certain self-love in talking so much about self-love: it wants to seem very enlightened as to the vice of self-love, and rests satisfied with its own penetration. I prefer an honest forgetfulness of self to a perpetual deploring of one's own self-love; and such forgetfulness only comes where the heart is full of God.

"Try rather to love God than to fidget yourself as to whether you do love Him; and make up for what is wanting more by increased love than by bemoaning your lack of it."[1]

*To the Same.*

"Never reject the longing for Communion, when it pleases God to let you feel it. Neither reject your attraction for Him, the gift of tears, of sweetness or consolation; but the more He lets you taste His graces, the more you ought to strive to purify your heart. . . . Beware of being too argumentative (*trop raisonnant*); receive all that God gives you with both hands open. Why should you marvel that you love more when His Hand is on you, than when He withdraws it, and leaves you to feel what you really are? Do not shrink from His Heavenly consolations; a state of innocence, in which love would have been altogether pure, would have had such. If it was a thing

[1] pp. 268, 271.

from which to seek detachment, would S. Paul so often bid us to 'rejoice'? Did not S. John Baptist leap for joy before his birth? and was it not owing to this the Blessed Virgin cried out, 'My spirit hath rejoiced'? Did Jesus Christ ever renounce the Heavenly consolations which His Father sent Him?"[1]

*To Madame de Luynes.*

"Each time that death comes among us, it should remind us of the curse of our nature and the just punishment of our sin; but among Christians, for whom Jesus Christ has overcome death, it ought chiefly to speak to us of His Victory, and of the Eternal Kingdom to which we journey as we leave this life. And thus, when we lose those we love, sorrow should be blended with consolation. 'Sorrow not,' S. Paul says, 'as those that have no hope.' He does not forbid our sorrow, but he will not have it like to that of unbelievers who have no hope. To them death is an eternal and irremediable separation; among us it is only a journey, and we ought to part as those who are soon to meet again. 'Let Christians shed tears, which the consolations of the faith will speedily dry,' S. Augustine says.[2] Meanwhile such tears are profit-

[1] p. 288.

[2] "Fundant ergo Christiani consolabiles lacrymas, quas cito reprimat fidei gaudium."

able: they make us like to Jesus, Who Himself wept for all men when He wept over Lazarus; they teach us our own weakness, they wash away sin, they lead us to long after the Heavenly Home where all sorrow ceases, and all tears are wiped away. Comfort yourself, my daughter, with these thoughts, and be sure that I share your grief and join in your prayers."[1]

*To Madame du Mans.*

"As to the question you ask, there is no doubt that as soon as any one feels conscious of mortal sin, he is bound to seek penitence and to prepare for Confession, but not necessarily to make such confession instantly: it may be well to sorrow over his sin first, and to take pains to do so well, without hurrying over or neglecting anything.

"It is equally sure that forgotten sins are pardoned with the rest, however long they may have been forgotten, and one is only bound to confess what one remembers. . . .

"Be a Mary in longing, a Martha in obedience."[2]

*To the Same.*

"Frequent Communion ought to be your great support, and you must follow the leading of Jesus Christ therein. God has not made a law of only giving His

[1] p. 307. [2] pp. 319, 320.

special graces to pure and innocent souls. Remember how He dealt with the sinner, and what sweetness He mingled with her tears. Remember how He dealt with Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils. 'His Mercy is over all His works.' Go on in confidence, and fear nothing. God is with you."[1]

*To the Same.*

"I have nothing new to say about austerities. Mortify your own will, govern your heart and control it thoroughly. Ask God's Help; speak always with moderation and charity; never yield to your temper;—these are the austerities I would enjoin you. Love silence and retirement. There is a silence and a retirement which is not to be interrupted by the external duties which surround us."[2]

*To Madame de la Guillaumie.*

"In one way, my daughter, I am sorry for the trying state you are in, and in another I am consoled by the hope I have that God is working secretly in you. He knows how to hide His workings,—none knows as He does how to act secretly. You will not be relieved by anything of sense, still less by reason or effort,—it is only by a bare, unquestioning faith, casting yourself into His Arms, and hoping against

[1] p. 323. [2] p. 327.

hope, that you will find help. Weigh well those words of S. Paul, 'hoping against hope.' I give them to you as your guide through these dark paths, and therein I give you the self-same guide by which Abraham was led all through his pilgrimage. Communicate in this spirit unhesitatingly, not only according to your rule, but whenever you feel drawn to do so, if God wills to draw you, however dimly. Do the like as to all your duties, making no effort to alter your condition, convinced that the deeper God casts you into the depths, the more firmly He holds you with His Hand. You must not appoint Him His time, or set limits to His work. When you seem pressed beyond endurance, some little ray of light will break forth from the darkness to sustain you. Be 'faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.'"[1]

*To the Same.*

"The wounds of the Beloved are the joy of a heart smitten with His Love. Be sure, my daughter, that the shaft which now pierces you comes from His Hand. Do not pray that He would lighten the force of the blow so much as that He would enable you to bear it well. These times of crosses are the precious spots of life; and we must give ourselves up in them to Him Who, by the wounds He makes, designs to

[1] p. 351.

draw out all our blood, that is all the sensual life that is in us. Remember how much God took from Job in one instant, and how all He left became a torture to him; he was not ashamed to confess and grieve for it. Do not you rend your garments, but suffer your heart to be rent by Him Who has willed to subject you to this bitter trial. Gather up all that earthly objects could claim, and offer it to Him Only. Live in the truth. I shall pray for you. Our Lord be with you always."[1]

*To Madame Du Mans.*

"If we were really convinced of our exceeding weakness, we should not be so much surprised when we commit faults; and I warn you that in speaking of these a great deal of self-love often creeps in, leading unconsciously to discouragement and a spirit of vexation. Do not stop to pull everything to pieces, but when your conscience tells you of a real fault, turn to God, saying, 'Of a truth, Lord, what wonder if a sinner sins? Uphold Thou me, or I shall continue to do the like.' And then abide before Him, humbled, but not troubled, and He will help you when you least expect it. Only be faithful to all your duties, and stedfast in frequenting the Sacraments, above all the Blessed Eucharist, wherein lies

[1] p. 354.

all our strength. Our Lord be with you. If you were a little more stedfast in the right way, you would think more about always pressing onwards, than of so much self-contemplation."[1]

*To Madame de la Guillaumie.*

"I am glad to find you aware of the uselessness of many words;—it ought to lead you to speak much to God, and to men only so far as obedience and charity require. Courtesy is a part of charity, inasmuch as charity desires as far as possible to vex no one. As to those who cannot be reproved without vexing them, the art of reproving such wisely is a great gift. One must beware of weakness or apologising, that does away with all the benefit of the correction, but it must be given with humility and gentleness. And so far from the wrong mind of those who receive correction amiss hindering our prayers, it is but an additional cause for prayer. When those to whom we speak as from God will not give heed to us, we must speak to God for them, and beg Him to give us a true spirit of charity in reproof. As to giving up the attempt at correction, that must only be when we see them to be quite incorrigible, specially through pride; but at the same time we ought to make such persons understand that if we leave off reproving

[1] p. 361.

them, it should be a source of great fear to them;—since they are in the position of a sick man to whom the physician ceases to apply any remedies, because he is past cure. Such persons should be made to feel that one is always ready to come to their aid with patience and charity, directly that they have a healthful desire to amend, and when one is constrained to keep silence it is a reason the more to cultivate an interior silence, so that by means of God speaking in us we may henceforth speak through His Holy Spirit."[1]

*To Madame du Mans.*

"As to illness, God is Ruler, but we on our side must do what we can to avoid it. It is a mistake to imagine that we should not shrink from such trials when they come; this shrinking is often the meritorious side thereof. I pray God to give you health, but at the same time I pray that He would teach you to say, 'Not my will, but Thine.' I hear, my daughter, that you are very much troubled by your sickness, and that you would fain choose any other cross. But Jesus Christ did not have any choice in His. He is with all His sick children, and it is His right to crucify us after His own fashion, for in His Agony He forestalled all our crosses, and blessed each one.

[1] p. 369.

Nevertheless I pray that He may lighten your burden, and at all events bear it with you." [1]

*To the Ursuline Nuns at Meaux.*

"Regretting as I do, my daughters, the inevitable interruption of my visitation (which I hope to resume as early as possible), God puts into my heart the thought of telling you on what it should specially turn. The things concerning which I would have you each examine herself individually, and give account thereof, are: First, silence: whether it is kept and loved,—whether you are convinced that it is the watchman of the soul, and the mortification of the tongue, the most needful means whereby to disarm the enemy of which, according to S. James, that tongue is the instrument.

"II. Then as to Divine service and prayer; whether you are punctual, if you are jealous of wasting any of the precious moments you spend before God, and strive to use them profitably in His Sight.

"III. As to that charity which ought to reign among sisters, whether you bear with one another as you would have God bear with you, and so far from provoking one another to wrath, whether you are beforehand in helping one another; whether you return blessing for anger or insult, if any one ever forget themselves so far as to give way to such.

[1] p. 381.

"IV. Then as to poverty. If you are really stripped of all, including the wish to give or receive. As to obedience, if it is from the heart, as to the Lord and not to man. In short, whether you are generally following S. Paul's rule, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily.' God be with you each and all."[1]

*To the Nuns of the Congregation at Coulomnier.*

"Several of you, my daughters, have asked my leave to communicate more frequently than is prescribed by your constitutions. Others have complained that your confessor deprived you of certain extra Communions allowed by the Superior. It is impossible for me to go into the individual causes for any such privations or extensions. So, instead of answering separate applications, I will give you certain rules which each one can apply to her own case. And first, you must distinguish between that unworthiness which arises from mortal sin, in which a man 'eats his own damnation,' 'not discerning the Lord's Body:'—and in which he incurs positive guilt; from other cases in which he may be wisely deprived of Communion or deprive himself thereof.

"I have nothing to say as to the first: every one knows that in such a case you cannot rightly approach the holy table without being absolved by the priest. If

[1] p. 458.

you should doubt whether a sin be mortal or venial, have recourse to him, whose office it is to discern between leper and leper;—and be satisfied with his judgment.

"But as to other cases where this unworthiness does not exist;—a confessor cannot refuse Communion to those whom he has absolved, but he may delay it, if he thinks them insufficiently prepared. I should not approve a frequent use of such delay at the great festivals, for fear of scandal, and, strictly speaking, those who are sincerely penitent and cleansed are free from mortal sin through absolution, and so have the requisite disposition for Communion.

"Next, as to the question of more or less frequent Communion, it is certain that the confessor, being in his priestly capacity God's appointed dispenser of the Sacraments, his judgment must be your rule, and you must not increase voluntary Communions contrary to his directions.

"In like manner, he may have good reasons for diminishing the usual Communion in special cases, or for exciting a hunger for this Heavenly Food by delay. He may also impose the privation of more frequent Communion as a penance, where he knows by experience that a soul is restrained from sin by the fear of being deprived of the Great Gift, and will return to the Altar with renewed fervour.

" . . . . There is no question but that a confessor

can enjoin increased Communions, not, as I think, as a penance (which seems to me inconsistent with the dignity of so gracious a Sacrament), but for the individual good of souls, of which he is the fittest judge. As to daily Communion, doubtless it is set before us as an aim by the Council of Trent, and it is what we pray for when we say 'Give us our daily bread;'—but at the same time it is certainly not a favour to be granted generally as things are at present, even in the best disciplined Communities;—it is a thing only to be attained after long preparation and much precaution. . . . Our Lord be with you."[1]

*To a Nun.*

"You have done well to take that passage from S. Matthew as your guide:—in very truth you need to learn the lowliness and meekness of Jesus Christ. You cannot master yourself too much in this respect—and you are right to do so specially with respect to the person of whom I spoke to you, and I am glad to hear what you tell me on that score. I have always had some uneasiness about what you told me concerning one whom you called by a name forbidden in the Gospel;[2] you did not seem to me to feel it sufficiently. The more infirm people are the more considerate we are bound to be towards them. I do not

[1] pp. 476, 486.

[2] Probably "fool."

say this to give you scruples as to the past, as you tell me you have done your duty about that matter, still less to lead you to enter into useless explanations, but in order to make you more watchful over yourself and your words. . . . Never say, I have done what I could—that is self-justification—say rather, I will do what I can. Only strive to justify yourself in the Sight of Him Who sees into the depth of all hearts."[1]

A large number of Bossuet's letters to the various religious he ruled are full of small details and minute affairs, such as one wonders he could find time to consider, and sometimes one cannot help feeling a certain impatience with the good ladies who asked him the same scrupulous questions, and obliged him to repeat the same answers so very often. As a whole there is much less of the wholly spiritual element in Bossuet's correspondence than in that of S. Francis de Sales;—the natural character of the two men would lead one to expect much less of tenderness. It is marvellous, however, that the Bishop of Meaux should have found time to write so much and so kindly as he did;—never expressing impatience at what must often have been harassing amid his multifarious occupations. Thus, writing from Meaux, April 14, 1696, in reply to some small details concerning Madame d'Albert's

[1] pp. 493, 501.

concerns, he mentions having just confirmed nearly eleven hundred people, and having communicated almost the whole population with his own hand, besides preaching five or six times in two days, "which did not prevent my preaching yesterday, nor will Sunday and Easter Day."[1] And another time he admits to being "very weary, having just confirmed between twelve and thirteen hundred people."[2]

Sometimes his correspondents seem to have reproached him (most unfairly) for not answering speedily, and even with not reading their letters attentively! But the Bishop always answers good-humouredly, though he sometimes expresses a wish in return that they would "not spare paper by writing too close, and squeezing in the ends of the lines," or by over small writing!

"As for me," he says at the end of a letter, in which he has gone patiently into the details of elections, etc., in a Community, "at my age, I ought to have no other object left save ever to have my own account ready to give to the Great Judge, and the welfare of all concerned."

The years were passing fast away, and his summons to give that account was fast approaching.

[1] Vol. xxviii. p. 277. [2] *Ibid.* p. 309.

## CHAPTER X.

### BOSSUET'S LAST DAYS.

BOSSUET APPOINTED CONSEILLER D'ÉTAT—PREMIER AUMONIER TO THE DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE—GOES TO SAINT-GERMAIN FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF CLERGY—JANSENISM, MORALE RELACHÉE—THE ABBÉ BOSSUET—PROBABILISM—QUESNEL—THE PROBLÊME ECCLESIASTIQUE—EFFORTS AT OBTAINING THE UNITY OF CHRISTENDOM—CORRESPONDENCE WITH LEIBNITZ AND MOLANUS—VERSION DE TREVOUX—QUARREL WITH THE CHANCELLOR DE PONTCHASTRAIN—CAS DE CONSCIENCE—BEGINNING OF BOSSUET'S LAST ILLNESS—HIS ACTIVITY—HOSPITALITY—THE ABBÉ BOSSUET'S URGENT ENDEAVOURS TO SUCCEED HIS UNCLE—BOSSUET'S APPLICATION TO LOUIS XIV. NOT ACCEPTED—LAST MOVE TO PARIS—FINAL ILLNESS AND DEATH—BURIAL—BOSSUET'S REMAINS TAKEN UP IN 1854, AND VERIFIED—HIS SUCCESSOR DE BISSY.

THE last few years of Bossuet's long and busy life were not destined to be inactive. During the busy turmoil of the Quietist controversy he had proofs of the royal favour as strong as his adversary of the reverse. On June 29, 1697, the Bishop of Meaux was appointed Conseiller d'État, and the following October he was further appointed *Premier Aumônier* to the Duchesse de Bourgogne. This latter post he desired, and even asked for, as he himself records in a letter to de la Broue, Bishop of Mirepoix. Perhaps he

thought to establish a counter influence which might prevent Fénelon's return to the Court of his former pupil, who to the end loved the Archbishop of Cambrai devotedly. A point of etiquette arose when the household of the new little Duchesse took their oaths—the Marquis de Dangeau, Chevalier d'honneur, pressing his right to precedence, whereas Bossuet claimed it as his own to take the oaths first, citing the fact of his having done so already when appointed to the same office about the late Dauphiness. Louis XIV. decided that the precedence could not be refused to M. de Meaux, "en considération de son grand mérite;" but de Dangeau would not play second fiddle, and he persuaded the King to allow him to take the oath in private! When the little Duchesse de Bourgogne, who was only eleven years old (she was Marie Adelaide of Savoy, daughter of the first King of Sardinia), saw the venerable white-haired Bishop kneeling before her to take the oaths, she could not help exclaiming, "Oh, Monseigneur, I am ashamed to see you thus!" This appointment kept Bossuet near the Court during the rest of his life. On June 1, 1700, we find him taking up his abode with his household at the Hôtel de Condé at Saint-Germain,[1] for the Assembly of Clergy, in which once more he was to play an important part. Realising, as he did, that this was the

[1] LE DIEU, *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 43.

last time he was likely to share in the labours of these national representatives, Bossuet was anxious to bring forward two points on which he felt strongly—Jansenism and its opposite, the relaxation of moral tone ("*la morale relâchée*").

To this end he presented two *Mémoires* to Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon, written concerning these subjects in the May previous, and during the many interviews with the King, which are chronicled by the Abbé Le Dieu, it is probable that he explained his mind fully to His Majesty, who was accustomed to be so much influenced by the opinions of his great theologian. At the same time, Louis XIV.'s prejudices were all favourable to the Jesuits, and he did not communicate Bossuet's papers to his Confessor, Père Lachaise, who was, by *esprit de corps*, and perhaps by conviction likewise, on the other side. Madame de Maintenon was the only person able to counterbalance his influence with the King, and consequently Bossuet was anxious to win her interest, and he lost no opportunity of doing so. On June 11th the Journal records his having had an interview with her as early as 7 a.m. on the subject. When at last Louis XIV. gave his authorisation to the Assembly to take the Casuists in hand, he specified that they were not to mention any condemned authors by name.[1]

The Assembly met on June 2nd. Jealousies arose

[1] *Vie de Bossuet*, vol. iv. p. 5.

as to the presidency;—Le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims, succeeding in excluding the Bishops (who, according to the rules laid down by the Assembly of 1695, ought to have shared in it). The manœuvring and caballing is wearisome to follow, and does not raise one's opinion of Archbishop le Tellier.[1] The Abbé Bossuet was there with his uncle, and "could not restrain exhibiting his vexation" about the presidency, or his indignation against the Archbishop of Rheims. Bossuet was very silent, his secretary says, but clearly showed his displeasure at the injustice of the measure, and at the cowardice of his brother Bishops for letting themselves be overruled by the imperious, worldly Le Tellier.

There was again some opposition to appointing a Commission to investigate "doctrine and moral;" but here Bossuet carried the day, and he was himself appointed head of the Commission, which was called upon by him to investigate no less than one hundred

[1] "Cet Archevêque et son neveu, l'Abbé de Louvois, ne cessèrent de continuer leurs brigues jusqu'à fatiguer les gens, et s'incommoder eux-mêmes. Car hier jeudi soir, M. de Reims dit chez l'Abbé de Louvois où il soupa: 'Il est bien fatiguant de faire le métier d'embaucheur.' Ce matin avant la messe, ils ont encore assiégé tous ceux de leur parti, de manière à ne leur laisser aucune liberté dans leurs suffrages; exigeant comme ils avoient toujours fait, qu'on leur donnât parole positive, dans la crainte qu'ils ne se laissent persuader par la force de la vérité que M. de Meaux devoit représenter."—Le Dieu, vol. ii. p. 44.

and sixty-two propositions which he had drawn up for condemnation—five against the Jansenists, four against certain Pelagian errors recently put forth in some Jesuit writings, and the rest on questions of moral theology. At the same time Bossuet published four Latin treatises on the principal points he laid before the Commission.[1] The Archbishop of Rheims had already made himself so unacceptable to the Assembly, and Bossuet feared so much that opposition to him might influence decisions he considered important, that he profited by the promotion of de Noailles to the Cardinalate, which was made known on June 28th, to get him brought in as virtual President. A fresh dispute arose as to who had the right to vote, and whether the Second Order of Clergy had a deliberative or only a consultative voice. Bossuet held to the latter opinion, and put down his nephew, who contended vehemently for the opposite view, and whose temper, as usual, made him very unmanageable. Wherever that individual presented himself he raised trouble, and even among his own adherents he was troublesome.[2] Some of the passages-at-arms between

[1] *De dubio in negotio salutis.*
*De Opinione minus probabili, ac simul minus tuta.*
*De Conscientia.*
*De Prudentia.*—*Œuvres*, vol. xxxi.

[2] "M. l'Évêque de Troyes . . . en fut fort surpris et un peu confus de son indiscrétion."—Le Dieu, vol. ii. p. 85.

him and the assessors are amusing—as when the Bishop of Auch turned and rebuked him for a contemptuous gesture caused by some utterance of that prelate, saying, "Monsieur, il ne faut pas hocher la tête;" to which the irrepressible Abbé replied, "Je parle à M. l'Abbé de Louvois, et point du tout à vous, Monseigneur!" The Abbé Le Dieu adds naïvely, "It is true that the Abbé Bossuet *branloit la tête*—I saw it; he often does it when he hears things he does not like."[1]

Meanwhile the quarrel between the friends and enemies of the Jesuits proceeded, and many harsh and bitter things were said on both sides. Bossuet did not like their doctrine or their tone, but he strove not to make the contest personal, and was annoyed at the way in which Archbishop Le Tellier seized every occasion of speaking of them in depreciatory and even insulting language. Le Dieu says that he declared that "though for the present M. de Rheims must be allowed to say his say, when the time came for drawing up a formal censure, he was determined that no bitter or harsh word should be admitted."[2] Meanwhile day after day the Journal records steady, hard work; and at this time, in spite of advancing years, Bossuet resumed his old habit of getting up in the middle of the night to work, and he worked so steadily, that

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 107. [2] Vol. ii. p. 64.

sometimes on Sundays he only heard mass, and returned to his writing "pour ne pas se détourner."[1] Bossuet's time was divided between reading up the works he condemned, writing concerning them, sitting in the Assembly, and visiting the various Prelates and Doctors taking part in the discussion. He does not seem to have had a very high idea of his colleagues, for he told a visitor in his secretary's presence that the Assembly was composed of the very weakest theologians to be found among the French Clergy, many of whom, into the bargain, were corrupted by the Jesuits.[2]

At length, August 26th, Bossuet laid the report of the Commissioners before the Assembly. The condemnation he sought for was unhesitatingly pronounced on the four Jansenist propositions, although there was not absolute harmony among the doctors on this perplexed question, and few—not even Bossuet himself—were willing to stigmatise the name of Arnauld.[3] The four Pelagian propositions concerning Grace were soon despatched, and the Assembly proceeded to the more numerous propositions which had reference to the Casuists and Probabilism. Bossuet

[1] Vol. ii. p. 95, etc.

[2] "Composée des prelats les plus foibles en doctrine qu'il y eût dans le Clergé, et dont quelques-uns étoient tout corrompus et livrés aux Jesuites."—*Ibid.* p. 71.

[3] "M. de Meaux a dit qu'il falloit épargner M. Arnauld, un si grand homme."—*Ibid.* p. 70.

laid down as a rule, concerning all mental reservations and equivocations, the precept given by our Lord,—"Yea, yea; nay, nay." A book had been published —"*Patriarchæ et Prophetæ*"—by the Casuists, which pleaded the cause of equivocation, as used by Abraham when calling Sarah his sister; by Isaac, Jacob, Rebecca, and other persons mentioned in Holy Scripture; and also bringing forward that often-misquoted Father, S. Augustine, as sanctioning deceit by his words, "*Non est mendacium sed mysterium.*" No one was better able to interpret S. Augustine's mind than his devoted student Bossuet, and he gave an elaborate view of the patristic mind on this head.

The necessity of love for God as a due qualification for rightly receiving the Sacrament of penance followed, and then the Assembly embarked in the question of Probabilism. This strange doctrine arose with Antony of Cordova, a Franciscan monk, who, in 1571, wrote that "all theologians were unanimous in affirming that the surest opinion was always to be adopted, when the opposite opinion seemed equally probable, and still more so in proportion as its probability was greater."[1] A "probable opinion" is one which, without the character or strength of certainty, nevertheless tends to the belief that any given action is permitted or forbidden.

[1] See Cardinal de Bausset, *Vie de Bossuet*, vol. iv. bk. xi.

In 1577 and 1584 the Dominicans de Medina and Bannez affirmed "that men might conscientiously prefer the less probable opinion to that which was more so." The name of Probabilism then became general, and their relaxed doctrine spread so rapidly, that, in 1592, Salonius, an Augustinian monk, wrote that the opinion, "that it was lawful in good conscience to prefer the least probable of two probable opinions, was held by a large number of distinguished theologians, chiefly of the school of S. Thomas."

The first Jesuit who publicly professed Probabilism was Vasquez, in 1598. Many members of the Society followed his example, and the name became associated with them. The early "Probabilists," as they were called, carefully laid down as a rule, that no "opinion which was in opposition to Holy Scripture, the decisions of the Church, or the general mind of the Fathers, could be held as probable;" and in such a sense Bellarmino, Pallavicini, and other great names, were reckoned among the Probabilists. It was on this doctrine of Probabilism that, as time went on, the Casuists founded opinions of so lax a nature, as to appear to many good and wise men utterly subversive of all Christian morality. Not that such lax morals were promulgated by bad men, or men of impure lives—their error sprang only from the idea of making religion easy and of bringing back sinners to

the fold by indulgence and laxity, whom it would be hopeless to win by severity or a more rigid discipline. It is only fair to say that if the doctrine of Probabilism found extensive favour and support among the Jesuits, some of its ablest opponents were also drawn from the Society, and the best known work in its refutation was published in 1694 by Gonzalez, General of the Jesuits. Bossuet however may be considered the real conqueror of the doctrine, which he summed up and laid before the Assembly so skilfully, that it did not hesitate to adopt his censure, and on Sept. 4th the formal documents, including a circular letter to the French Bishops,—all composed by Bossuet,—were signed by the Assembly, which held its final sitting on the 21st, and then broke up.[1]

That same day—the festival of S. Matthew—Bossuet preached before the King and Queen of England (James II.), then exiled to Saint-Germain—all their Court, and the large mass of clergy assembled there. Not unnaturally, during his residence at Saint-Germain, the Bishop of Meaux had been sought after by the English royalties, and had often visited them. It does not seem necessary to speculate, as the Abbé Le Dieu does, whether these visits "had in view a nomination to a Cardinal's hat;"—a subject about which he confesses himself to have been very inquisi-

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 146.

tive, though unsuccessfully so. Indeed, the good Abbé strikes one as having been possessed largely with the faculty of inquisitiveness, and he often enters into an amusing detail of his little manœuvres to find out somewhat concerning the doings of his more reticent master. Apparently he was not singular in discussing the question of a Cardinal's hat for Bossuet. "We have the pleasure," he says, "of hearing all over Paris, from great and small, that M. de Meaux ought to have had the last hat, and it is more creditable to him to be judged worthy of this honour by all the public than it will be to somebody else to win it by Court favour or intrigue." Bossuet's biographers generally have assumed that his birth, which was not noble, stood in the way of his promotion to the Sacred College. Certainly his successor, de Bissy, who was in no other respect Bossuet's equal, received it.

About this time another storm was raised in the ecclesiastical world, rising out of a book of Quesnel's published in 1693. He was at that time Superior of the Oratory, a most saintly man, and de Noailles formally approved the work, called "*Réflexions morales sur les Évangiles*," speaking of it as "meat for the strong, and milk for babes." In 1696 the Abbé Barcos, a nephew of the celebrated Port-Royalist Saint-Cyran, brought out a book upon Grace, which was pounced upon by all the opposite party as incul-

cating Jansenist error; and de Noailles published an *Ordonnance* condemning it, which was written by Bossuet. This fed the flame, for the friends of Barcos asked why one book should be approved and the other condemned, when both taught the same doctrine? and an attack on de Noailles, called "Le Problême Ecclesiastique," appeared in 1699. The Archbishop, who hated the Jesuits, and was very generally suspected of being a Jansenist at heart, was convinced that they were the authors of this attack, and he succeeded in getting a decree from the Parliament ordering it to be burnt. Soon after a new edition of Quesnel's book being called for, the Archbishop asked Bossuet to undertake its revision, and he brought out accordingly an "Avertissement,"[1] as a Preface to the new edition, which professed to rectify errors and make the book sound; but Quesnel declined so cumbrous an appendage to his work, and the Archbishop refused his approbation. Accordingly the book was published in its original shape without that approbation, and eventually condemned as Jansenist by Clement XI. in 1708.[2] Another affair in which Bossuet was concerned during his last years arose out of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, "that national error," as it has been well called by M. de Saint-Lam-

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. iii. p. 305.

[2] LACHAT, *Remarques Historiques*, vol. iii. p. vi.

bert,—for there can be no doubt that it was a national act, sanctioned by public opinion, and not merely an individual act of Louis XIV. or his government. We have not space here to go into the many evils arising out of this unhappy measure, or to recapitulate the scenes of persecution and blood which stained too many provinces of France, where the spirit of a Fénelon in Poitiers did not guide what were called missionary efforts. The death of Louvois and the Peace of Ryswick (1697) led to milder measures, and Bossuet entered into a correspondence with M. de Basville, Intendant of Languedoc, and her Bishops,—Mirepoix, Nîmes, Montauban, and Rieux,—in which he advocated the cause of gentleness and tolerance—a line he had always pursued in his own diocese, as we have already seen. Two Pastoral Instructions,[1] published in 1700 and 1701, enter fully into Bossuet's opinions on this subject. His active brain and pen were also engaged in the renewal of a most interesting attempt to bring about reunion between the German Lutherans and the Church of Rome—an attempt which indeed requires a history to itself in any way to do it justice, but which nevertheless we may glance at, not only with a view to its historical interest as a part of Bossuet's theological career, but also as showing how very far some of the greatest and largest-minded men of his

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 83.

day were prepared to go in the path of conciliation and smoothing away hindrances to the reunion of Christendom.

Some years previously certain steps had been taken in this direction. After the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, Spinola, titular Bishop of Tina, a very learned and conciliatory man, had made advances towards the Lutherans, and had astonished many of them (so it is said) by showing that there was not so wide a gulf as they imagined between the Council of Trent and the Augsburg Confession. The Emperor Leopold I. entered warmly into these projects, and Spinola having been to Rome, and won the approval of both Pope and Cardinals, was summoned to the See of Neustadt, and forthwith entered into communication with the Abbot of Lokkum, better known as Van der Meulen, or Molanus, one of the ablest and wisest among the Lutheran professors. A document called "*Regula circa Christianorum omnium ecclesiasticam reunionem*,"[1] supposed to be the work of Molanus, was put forth in the name of all the theologians of Hanover; and the Bishop of Neustadt at the same time consulted Bossuet as to their projects, who conveyed in return an assurance of his own interest and the favourable light in which these were regarded by Louis XIV.

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 360.

A little later, and Bossuet was drawn more closely into the matter. At that time the Princess Palatine, a granddaughter of James I. of England, was Abbess of Maubuisson. When an exile in Holland, after the battle of Prague, she had forsaken Lutheranism and become a fervent Catholic; and it was Louis XIV. who had appointed her to the Abbey of Maubuisson. Her sister, the Duchess Sophia of Hanover, who like herself was a clever and highly educated woman, made acquaintance with Mme. de Brinon, already mentioned as a great favourite of Madame de Maintenon, and a leading spirit at Saint-Cyr. Having lost her favour there, Mme. de Brinon was introduced to Maubuisson by the Duchess of Hanover, where she soon acquired a great influence over both the royal sisters. Both were deeply interested in the theological questions of the day, and both threw themselves with ardour into the design of effecting a reunion between the Lutherans and Catholics. The great philosopher Leibnitz had entered into it, and in July 1691 he wrote to Mme. de Brinon in earnest language on the subject:—"All those," he says, "who keep up the schism by throwing obstacles in the way of reconciliation are the real schismatics, and those who are ready to do whatever is possible to bring about visible communion are true Catholics."[1] It is

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xviii. p. 118.

not quite clear whether the desire to bring the Bishop of Meaux actively into the undertaking originated with the ladies or with Leibnitz. The latter says, "We are indebted to France for having preserved the liberty of the Church against the infallibility of the Popes, without which I believe the greater part of the West would be already under the yoke;"[1] and in a letter written in the September following, the Duchess of Hanover refers to Bossuet's having formerly seen the projects entertained by the Bishop of Neustadt. In a letter to Mme. de Brinon (Sept. 29, 1691), Bossuet says, "I think that certain concessions might be made to the Lutherans, such as Communion in both kinds."[2]

A Project of Reunion, drawn up in Latin[3] by Molanus and translated by Bossuet,[4] shows the mind in which both these learned and eminent men were concerning so important a matter. Molanus asks six things: (1) That the Lutherans may receive the Blessed Sacrament in both kinds; (2) That they may not generally have to use solitary masses (although, he says, they do not hold these as "simpliciter illicita,"[5] inasmuch, as in case of necessity, and where there are no assistants, their celebrants may communicate alone); (3) That they may retain their

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xviii. p. 119. [2] *Ibid.* p. 124.
[3] Vol. xvii. p. 394. [4] *Ibid.* p. 432. [5] *Ibid.* p. 401.

doctrine of justification, which he defines as requiring for the remission of sin, not only sorrow, but sole trust in the death and merit of Jesus Christ, and a firm resolution of amendment; (4) That the Pope would acknowledge the marriages contracted by the Lutheran Clergy, "every one agreeing that the celibacy of Priests is only an ecclesiastical institution, which the Church can abrogate, and the Council of Florence having permitted the Greek Priest to marry;"[1] (5) That the Pope should confirm and ratify the Orders conferred by Protestants hitherto; and (6) That the Pope should treat with such princes as are in possession of Church territory, and bring them to agree as to terms of reunion. These points granted, Molanus says that the Lutherans are ready—

(1) To acknowledge the Pope as first among Bishops, and as sovereign Patriarch in order and dignity by ecclesiastical right, especially as Patriarch of the West, and to render him all due obedience in things spiritual; (2) To accept all Roman Catholics as brethren, notwithstanding their Communion in one kind, and other matters, until a legitimate Council shall decide thereon; and (3) To accept the Orders and obedience of the Church.

Molanus then goes into the various controverted

[1] Vol. xvii. p. 437.

points between Catholics and Protestants, most of which he treats as more a question of words than faith—such as "whether the Sacrament of the Altar be a sacrifice," in which he believes them to agree; as to the doctrine of intention; as to the number of Sacraments, of which he says the only question is whether all seven be "of like sort with Baptism and the Eucharist;" as to justification, where he shows that they are really at one; as to good works; as to prayers for the dead, which, he says, many Protestants, especially those of the Confession of Augsburg, use. Of the Immaculate Conception alone he says, "All Protestants reject it." Of the invocation of Saints, Molanus says they are quite ready to accept it if used as asking their intercession—if the prayer "Holy Mary, deliver me in the hour of death," is to be understood as meaning "Pray to Thy Son, that in the hour of death He would deliver me." Purgatory they are ready to accept as a "*sententia problematica*"[1] with S. Augustine; the Primacy, as already said, they would accept, though not the infallibility of the Pope. Monasticism and vows are an easy question, he says, for some Protestants still retain them, together with the rule of S. Benedict, and "those other matters which are of primitive institution."[2]

Upon this document Bossuet wrote a double dis-

[1] Vol. xvii. p. 427. [2] p. 455.

quisition; one in Latin[1] for Molanus and his brother theologians, which is in a strictly technical form, and another in French, intended for the royal persons and others interested in the question, called "Réflexions;"[2] and written in a simpler, less severe style. He meets the Lutheran Doctor in a most friendly spirit; though of course on one demand, that of receiving the Lutheran pastors "already ordained" as priests, there could be but one answer, that, never having received the laying on of hands from the Episcopate, they are not ordained at all, in fact are "simply laymen." Bossuet sums up what he thinks the Pope might and would grant—in which the last point is met by the proposal to ordain and consecrate the pastors who seek reunion as priests and bishops. Prayers and hymns in the vulgar tongue in services, as also the Bible generally (Bossuet volunteers that Luther's version might be used, "because of its clearness and elegance);"[3] Communion in both kinds; "the retrenchment in the worship of the saints or images of whatever savours of superstition."[4] Moreover, Bossuet held out the prospect that the Pope might permit those Lutherans who, being married, should receive Holy Orders or Consecration, to retain their wives, their successors being appointed from the celibate.[5]

[1] *Sententia Episcopi Meldensis*, *Œuvres*, vol. xvii. p. 458.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 548. [3] p. 589. [4] p. 590.
[5] "Superintendentibus ac ministris in episcopos ac presbyteros

A most interesting correspondence between Bossuet and Leibnitz followed,[1] in which an elaborate discussion concerning Councils and their authority occurs;—one of the most interesting parts being on the Council of Trent, respecting which Bossuet says, "There is no hope of reunion if it is to be supposed that the decisions of that Council remain doubtful."[2]

As Leibnitz took more and more the lead, Molanus dropped out of the correspondence, to Bossuet's regret, for he always believed that the negotiation was more likely to have borne fruit under his guidance than under that of the more learned, perhaps, but less devoted philosopher.

The correspondence dropped in 1694, but Leibnitz renewed it in 1699, and some most learned letters concerning the Vulgate, etc.,[3] were exchanged during the two following years. In 1701 the letters ceased,

ex hujusmodo pacti formula ordinatis, quandiu erunt superstites, sua conjugia relinquantur; ubi decesserint, cœlibes præficiantur, multa probatione, ætate matura."

This passage is not given in Lachat's edition of Bossuet's "Sententia;" probably on the ground that it was erased in the original MSS. But Cardinal de Bausset, who cites it as a proof of Bossuet's great desire for reunion, says that in that same original manuscript there is a marginal note in the author's own handwriting to the effect that the erased passage had nevertheless been sent to Leibnitz and Molanus. And in 1702, writing to Clement XI. on the same subject, Bossuet makes precisely the same suggestion.—*Histoire de Bossuet*, vol. iv. p. 184.

[1] See *Œuvres*, vol. xviii. [2] *Ibid.* p. 216. [3] *Ibid.* p. 246, etc.

apparently without result ;[1] but just at the same time Clement XI. applied to Bossuet for counsel on the same subject, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha having opened communications with the See of Rome on the point of reunion. Bossuet's first intention was to send the Pope his writings on Molanus's propositions, but on reflection he determined rather to write a fresh paper,[2] which Le Dieu says he found, on careful examination, to be an abridgment of the Bishop's former treatises, "written with all the force of the first, only about half the length, without dropping any of the quotations from the Fathers," etc. The Abbé Le Dieu says that, while preparing this document, Bossuet went carefully over his own "Histoire des Variations."[3] The war which absorbed the attention of all Europe in 1702 brought an end to all these hopes, and the interesting papers connected with them remained lying by in the Bishop of Troyes' study until 1753, when the Abbé Leroy published them, with other posthumous works of Bossuet.

[1] Bossuet seems to have hoped that, if seemingly in vain at the time, these efforts would not be useless ultimately. Le Dieu says, on August 12, 1701, that Bossuet closed his letter to Leibnitz, which he sent to M. de Torcy, "saying, that it must be hoped these things will have their effects some day, if not now."—*Journal*, vol. ii. p. 197.

[2] *De Professoribus Confessionis Augustanæ*, *Œuvres*, vol. xviii.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 212, 213.

In 1701, too, Bossuet published his second Instruction Pastorale,[1] already mentioned, answering the minister Basnage: he wrote against a book published by a Doctor of Sorbonne concerning Oriental religions, which he considered dangerous, as "fostering that indifference concerning all religions which is the mania of our day." In 1702 he also wrote a large critical work on a version of the New Testament put forth by one Simon, an Oratorian, known as the Version de Trévoux:[2] and during his very last days he was occupied in reviewing and adding to a manuscript begun in 1693, refuting the *Histoire Critique des principaux Commentateurs du Nouveau Testament;* as also Simon's work, and which was called *Défense de la Tradition et des Saints Pères;*[3] as also a Dissertation on Grotius.[4]

Amid all this work, well-nigh too much one would have thought for his declining strength, Bossuet met with an annoyance which ruffled him exceedingly. He did not find the authorities as ready as he thought them bound to be in condemning Simon's book, or in pressing his retractation of what Bossuet believed to be serious errors therein, and he resolved himself to pass a solemn censure upon it. He waited for the Archbishop of Paris to do the like, which was done, September 15,

[1] Vol. xvii. p. 143.
[2] Vol. iii. p. 372.
[3] Vol. iv.
[4] Vol. iii.

1702; and just as his own censure was about to follow, Bossuet received tidings that the Chancellor de Pontchastrain had forbidden its publication without the approbation of a doctor of theology—naming Pirot. Bossuet had no objection to Pirot, with whom he frequently took counsel concerning his theological works, but he was deeply stung by the attempt to subject an act of his episcopal jurisdiction to any priest, the rather that for so great a length of time, during the rule of five successive Chancellors, he had never been hampered by any of these old and half-forgotten formalities. There is something pathetic in the appeals[1] of the aged Bishop, who had done so much service to his Church during the long years of toil which had whitened his

[1] "L'Évêque de Meaux se croit obligé de représenter très humblement à sa Majesté le nouveau traitement qu'on lui fait, au sujet d'un livre qu'il se croit obligé d'imprimer contre la version et les notes du Nouveau Testament de Trévoux. . . . On lui fait des incidens, sur lesquels il ne croit pas devoir passer outre, sans les avoir exposés à sa Majesté en toute humilité et respect. Cet évêque ecrit depuis trente à quarante ans pour la défense de l'Église contre toutes sortes d'erreurs; et cinq chanceliers de France consécutifs, depuis M. Séguier, y compris celui qui remplit si bien aujourd'hui cette charge, lui ont toujours fait expédier le privilege, sans le soumettre jamais à aucun examen. . . . L'Évêque de Meaux espère de la bonté et de la justice de Sa Majesté. . . . afin de laisser la réputation saine et entière à un Évêque qui a blanchi dans la défense de la vraie foi, et dans le service de Sa Majesté, en des emplois d'une si grande confiance." —*Mémoire au Roi*, vol. xxxi. p. 67.

head and worn out his strength, against what he felt to be an insult both to his order and himself.

"It would be very painful to me," he says, writing to Cardinal de Noailles, "to be the first to undergo this severe treatment, but the worst is that it is only a step towards subjecting others to the like yoke. . . . I implore Madame de Maintenon's help, although I dare not write to her for it. Your Eminence will do what is right. May God keep you."[1] Not finding the Cardinal's advocacy sufficiently active, Bossuet went to Paris, and sought a special interview with the King on the subject which so sorely tried him. Several audiences took place between Louis XIV. and his venerable Bishop, and at last, after many difficulties and formalities, almost as though the matter in hand were a treaty of peace between two great belligerent nations, the King brought about "*à l'aimable*" (says the Abbé Le Dieu), a conference between Bossuet, de Noailles and the Chancellor, the result of which was that the latter consented to allow Bossuet to publish his book and his censure upon Simon, as of old, without interference. But it took four hours' hard fighting, though at last Bossuet remained "very much satisfied, not for his own sake only, but for that of all the Bishops." A few days later Anisson, the publisher, who had first received the order not

[1] Vol. xxxi. p. 65.

to print Bossuet's Ordonnance, came to say that he had received the Chancellor's orders to print whatever the Bishop of Meaux pleased![1] There were some uneasy passages yet to come between him and Cardinal de Noailles about the same condemnation; and as one glances wearily along the discussion and its various details and intrigues, a humiliating sense of the littleness of all men, even the learned and good, will come sadly across one.

But one more public question of theology saw Bossuet putting out his eagle strength, nor would it now be worth dwelling upon, save as his last effort. It is known in the interminable contest between Jesuits and Jansenists as the *Cas de Conscience*, and turned upon the kind of submission due to the Pope's utterances on Jansenism;—a majority of Doctors of the Sorbonne granting that "a respectful silence" was sufficient obedience. Cardinal de Noailles was supposed by some to wink both at the question and answer,—if not more. Bossuet was applied to, and, as his secretary says, he at once "took fire."[2] He foresaw that the King would probably ask his opinion in the matter, and forthwith he began to read up the subject with all the energy of forty years back! He wrote upon it also, and finished his "*Réflexions sur le Cas de Conscience*" on Jan. 11, 1703. The stir in the

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 332. [2] *Ibid.* p. 357.

religious world was great, and the Jesuits—who had never been Bossuet's special friends—were diligent in seeking him, and urging him onwards. The whole thing is tedious in detail, but it is interesting to see Bossuet throwing himself laboriously into it, and declaring that he "wished to do this one service yet for the Church."[1] He was writing "*Sur l'Autorité des Jugemens Ecclésiastiques*," and studying, making copious extracts with his own hand, collating, etc., up to the time when bodily suffering overpowered even his iron will, and he was constrained to pause. This manuscript has been lost.

Nor was it only in great matters of theology that the old Bishop's marvellous energy was displayed. Through these latter years his perpetual journeyings to and from Paris and Versailles, to Meaux and Germigny, to Conflans, Saint-Germain, and other places, must have been wearying to a younger man; and latterly movement, especially in a carriage, had become a serious evil to him.

Bossuet's health had always been good;—one never finds him hindered in his work by the ordinary ailments from which the generality of men suffer occasionally. The Abbé Le Dieu, whose Journal is an amusing medley of the gravest affairs of Church and State with the minutest details of the Bishop's

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 442.

physical condition, mentions latterly some small internal derangements, together with the detail of their treatment, but it is rare that any work or duty is omitted. In 1699 an attack of erysipelas caused some anxiety at his age; and the results were very weakening, so that for the first time he had to discontinue the practice of abstinence in Lent, by his doctor's orders. He used to compare himself to Job, and say he was "*ulceribus plenus;*" but he was not obliged to stop any of his usual work, except that of preaching, which the physicians forbade on the curious ground, that he preached with so much animation as to involve a risk of poisoning the wounds formed by his complaint! However, his strong constitution threw off all this malady, and all through the time immediately following we find him working in a way which would have been thought excessive by many far younger men. All through his residence at Saint-Germain, during the Assembly, we have seen how incessant his work was, and on his return to Meaux he continued a ceaseless round of diocesan toil. One while (Nov. 14, 1700) he is receiving Sisters of Charity for the Hospital, and meeting all the town Clergy in conference[1]—then holding a large Ordination, spending much time in individual instruction to his Ordinands[2] on New Year's Day 1701, and

[1] Le Dieu, vol. ii. p. 163. [2] *Ibid.* p. 167.

receiving all the civic authorities after having said Mass in his own chapel, and assisted at the Cathedral High Mass, as also at Vespers and Sermon; holding the *Assemblée des Syndics du Clergé* one morning, and in the afternoon of the same day that of the *Dames de la Charité*;—as usual celebrating pontifically and preaching on all great festivals, frequenting his Seminary, holding his Synod, in the course of which he suddenly rose, and, holding his square cap in one hand, raised the other to his head, saying,—

"My very dear brethren, these white hairs warn me that I must soon appear before God and give account of my ministry, and that this is perhaps the last time I shall address you. I intreat you, by the bowels of His Divine Compassion, do not let all that I have said fall fruitless from my lips, so that the Lord should reproach me when I come before Him with not having fulfilled my duty towards you. Let your conduct prove that my word has not been barren. I take our Divine Saviour to witness, that throughout my episcopate I have never had any other intention than that of leading you to fulfil the duties of your holy calling worthily, a calling on which the salvation of the people committed to you deperds. I hope you will not deny me the consolation I expect from you, and that in our last hour our Divine Master will not reproach either you for not having profited by that which He committed to me

on your behalf, or myself for having held back such teaching as to the duties of your office."[1] Again we find him settling parish affairs, taking part in the Jubilee services of 1702, preaching—sometimes for an hour at once—"with a full clear voice," receiving every one who wished to see him;—and all this together with constant and close literary work. Le Dieu constantly records long hours spent over his *Defensio*, which he was revising, as also his *Politique Sacrée*, "for which he was continually studying Holy Scripture," and other former writings, besides a fresh work on the Apocalypse, concerning which Le Dieu says, "M. de Meaux can hardly leave working at his book on the Apocalypse for a moment."[2] His diversion seems to have been versifying the Psalms, and constantly when travelling, if he had no other work of importance, he would produce a metrical version of some psalm at the end.[3] His hospitality too, which was great, must have been a certain strain upon him. The Abbé Le Dieu chronicles a succession of guests wherever Bossuet was, but chiefly at Germigny, where he continually

[1] Quoted from the *Journal de Verdun*, by Cardinal de Bausset, vol. iv. p. 356.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 263.

[3] Those who wish to study Bossuet's poetry will find it in the 26th vol. of his works; but it is noways remarkable or very interesting, and his reputation as an author depends rather on his prose than his poetry.

found time for a walk in the woods with his intimates, where they would often read aloud, as in the "Philosophers' Allée" at Versailles. His relations were almost always living upon him, and bringing all their friends and connections to his house. Bossuet's favourite brother, father to the Abbé Bossuet, died during the excitement of the Cambrai affair, and the Abbé's letters are interspersed with pious reflections and commonplace lamentations for his father, and intreaties to his uncle to send him money. Bossuet himself evidently felt his brother's death very much. Writing to M. de la Broue from Versailles, Feb. 24, 1699, he says: "No one knows better than you, Monsieur, what I have lost;—such a brother, such a friend—so gentle, so wise, so straightforward! He was everything to me. God has taken it all from me, and I feel so left alone, that I hardly know how to go on. I can only say, God is my Master, and a good Master too, and Jesus Christ will keep His Word and supply the place of all He takes away."[1] Two of Bossuet's sisters died at a short interval before himself —Mme. de Chasot in Feb. 1702, and Mme. Foucault in June 1703, the latter seemingly in his apartments in Paris, where, during a long illness, Le Dieu says that her cheerful patience and intellectual conversation attracted every one, so that her room was not only

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. xxx. p. 262.

the rendezvous of all the family, but of all her brother's distinguished vistors.[1]

During the last years of Bossuet's life, his nephew the Abbé appears perpetually, and not in at all a favourable light, or one caculated to make one forgive his intriguing persecution of Fénelon. Numerous passages in Le Dieu's Journal have been erased which recorded his selfish views, his neglect of his uncle, and even still more discreditable things. Probably the Abbé Le Dieu made these erasures himself when the acrimony he felt towards his master's nephew had worn off with time, although, to say the truth, it was but a sparring friendship (if such a name may be profaned as between them!) which they kept up: "Je n'y reconnois aucune apparence d'amitié véritable ni de cordialité," Le Dieu says, November 1706; and they seldom concluded an interview "sans nous dire assez nos vérités" (October 1709, vol. iv. p. 260); in other words, expressing mutual distrust and dislike—only holding together inasmuch as to a certain degree each served the other's interests. But there are often words left indicating the tendency of the passages, and without these, quite enough of the ordinary entries in the Journal remain to characterise the Abbé Bossuet. His natural disposition[2] seems to have been captious

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 446

[2] Le Dieu talks of his "rétilleries."—Vol. ii. p. 393.

and troublesome; and work went well when "the Abbé—perpetually contradicting all that is good, but not choosing to do any himself"—was absent.[1]

From the time Jacques Bossuet was in Rome, when he was always urging his uncle to forward his interests, he seems to have aimed at succeeding him at Meaux, and his love of intrigue and manœuvring found full scope during the remainder of the Bishop's life in this direction. Doubtless it casts a blemish over the memory of the uncle, but it is only fair to remember that when he yielded to the self-seeking urgency of his nephew he was an old man, and daily growing weaker under the pressure of severe bodily pain and its weakening influences. Although as late as the end of 1700 the watchful Secretary pronounced his master "perfectly well," it was not so. As far back as 1696, Bossuet had had premonitory symptoms, to which unfortunately sufficient heed had not been given, but the evil advanced, and on November 30, 1701, after a long morning's work at his MS. on the Apocalypse, Le Dieu was surprised to find Bossuet awaiting the visit of Du Verney, a celebrated Parisian surgeon. A few days later, Dodart, his ordinary medical attendant, told the secretary that Bossuet was suffering from stone, but that he might live twenty years yet before it became acute or dangerous. At the same time

[1] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 396.

the doctors recommended him to travel as little as possible, to have softer springs put to his carriage, and even to set up a litter for his ordinary and inevitable journeys. This was done, and Bossuet submitted to such régime and precautions as were prescribed: he was no longer permitted to keep abstinence, and Le Dieu was sent to the Curé of Versailles to ask a dispensation for the venerable Bishop in the Lent of 1702, on the ground of his seventy-five years of age,—he would not allow any other reason to be pleaded. That Christmas Eve (1701) for the first time he was absent from midnight Mass, "not," he said, "that it is necessary, but they say I must take care of myself." Month by month his state of health evidently grew more serious, and as that worsened, the restless activity of Jacques Bossuet and his brother and sister increased. The former was perpetually travelling backwards and forwards between Meaux, Paris, and Versailles, besieging every one likely to forward his views, and winning for himself the nickname of "*l'Abbé neveu qui va de porte en porte.*"[1]

For reasons best known to himself, Jacques Bossuet wished to conceal the fact of his uncle's declining health from the world, and even after fresh attacks had led to further consultation with de Tournefort and Mareschal, a celebrated operator, he pretended not to

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 402.

believe in the real state of the case even to Le Dieu, bidding him "think what he pleased about the illness, but say nothing." The fact was he wanted to keep Bossuet at the Court until such time as he should have obtained a promise of succeeding him; and even when the Bishop was perfectly unfit to move, the selfish man urged his going to Versailles in his capacity of Chaplain to the Duchess of Bourgogne with this object. Bossuet himself used to speak as though he were looking to the fatal termination of his malady, and he told those around him that he never had the 22nd Psalm, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" out of his mind; that he went to sleep and woke up repeating it, calling it "the psalm of death," as consecrated by the Saviour in His own Agony; adding that it was "full of confidence, and there is nothing like confidence as a preparation for death."[1]

Early in 1703, Fagon, the King's chief physician, was also called into consultation, but on the Ember Sunday of that Lent, Bossuet held his Ordination as usual, having travelled to Meaux in his litter. Le Dieu remarked on Palm Sunday that the Bishop was evidently in great suffering while saying Mass (he was then once more at Versailles), and the doctors would not allow of his return to Meaux. In fact, on Maunday Thursday

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 289.

they ascertained past question the nature of his disease, and he was so overcome at the prospect of an operation, that the four doctors decided to give up any idea of it. Distress of mind and physical pain combined altogether upset his strong mind, and for a short time Bossuet lost self-control and consciousness. The Abbé Bossuet played upon this weakness in a cruel and selfish manner, continually working upon his uncle's mind, and for the moment displaying an assiduity in attendance upon him which unhappily was by no means uniform. Both he and the Louis Bossuets had the meanness to complain on all sides that the Bishop had done nothing for him. All possible pressure was brought to bear upon the sick man, even apparently through his ordinary confessor, Père Damascène, a *Trinitaire* of Meaux, whom the Abbé Bossuet summoned to Versailles at his uncle's desire,[1] and who was greatly courted by himself and his brother. Bossuet also sent for Père de Riberolles, the Superior of his Seminary, and Saint-André, his Grand Archidiacre, and Prior of Varelles. Writing to the former, he says,

[1] The beginning of a note from Bossuet himself to this religious, written on that trying Maunday Thursday, was found after his death:

"PARIS, *Avril* 5, 1703.

"J'ai un extrême besoin, mon révérend Père, que vous veniez ici au plutôt pour me déterminer à la taille, qu'il faudra peut-être souffrir au premier jour." . . .

"I am awaiting you anxiously to receive from you the spiritual consolations of which I have need in my present painful position." And when they came, he said to them that he had long known what awaited him, but he had not wished to distress others by speaking of it, "but now it is decided, and I have every reason to believe that the malady is serious, and will kill me."[1]

Soon after this, the Bishop himself told Le Dieu about his malady, adding that there was nothing for him to do but to lie still under God's Hand, accepting His Will, and trusting everything to His Mercy. The Abbé too took the Secretary into his confidence as to his uncle's condition! and talked of the impossibility of working under another Bishop of Meaux, the "*triste vie*" of an ecclesiastic living in Paris without employment, and much more, with the object of making Le Dieu say that he ought to be appointed as coadjutor. Certainly one would have respected Le Dieu if he had not done so, but he does not seem to have felt guilty of any meanness in accepting the bait he saw offered; and he records of himself, that he "did not fail to tell Jacques Bossuet how well the Bishopric would suit him, *et le reste!*"[2] Thereupon the Abbé poured out the most extravagant flatteries upon the Secretary, with innumerable professions of his own intended good

[1] DE BAUSSET, *Hist. de Bossuet*, vol. iv. p. 364.

[2] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 412.

deeds, and rewards for those who had served his uncle well! Le Dieu took all this for what it was worth; and as a proof that the Abbé wanted to conciliate every one in his own favour, "even me, though I can be of no possible use to him!" He proceeded to abuse his former friend and colleague in dirty work at Rome, Phelippeaux,—all in the strictest confidence,—only, says Le Dieu, with a gleam of fun, Phelippeaux had been beforehand with him, and had been abusing the Abbé. "The sum of the whole thing is," says Le Dieu, "that he wants to get the Bishopric of Meaux, and to make us all feel that it is through that means that he can reward us. He ended by begging for my friendship, making many excuses for all the raillery I have often had to put up with from him."

It must be confessed that the worthy secretary had somewhat of the Boswell in him, and the simplicity with which he records his own inquisitiveness and anxiety to find out all that was going on is very amusing. After the above conversation he went to the Archevêché, where his curiosity was still more piqued at finding the Abbé Bossuet's carriage waiting, while the Abbé himself was closeted with the Cardinal. A day or two later the Bishop of Meaux told Le Dieu he was going to Versailles; the secretary remonstrated because of the discomfort and risk of the *trajet*, and asked if any important business took him there?

Bossuet answered in the negative—"it was only to show himself;" and Le Dieu was more than ever convinced that it was on his nephew's behalf this was needed. The following week Le Dieu spoke to Pirot, the Sorbonne Doctor, of the necessity of giving the Bishop of Meaux a coadjutor who would do the work for which he was now unable, suggesting that his nephew would be the best person, and also that he, M. Pirot, should propose it to the Bishop. Pirot replied, "with an affirmative interrogation," "Is not the Abbé Bossuet seeing to it himself?" The said Abbé seemed to think his prospects good. He was walking with Le Dieu in the *Pepinière du Roule,* and, as they admired the orange trees there, Le Dieu said, on purpose to draw him out, that he hoped the Abbé would see M. de Meaux' orange trees as fine some day. "I hope nothing about it," was the answer. Meanwhile the Bishop was nursing himself up to go to Versailles, and there were endless private consultations between him and his nephews. Le Dieu thought that he was feeling reluctant to resign his post to Jacques Bossuet. Since the last attack of illness the Bishop had given up his usual hard study, and now spent all his spare time in meditation on Holy Scripture, which Le Dieu says he always found him reading. Sometimes he read Fleury's Church History, and he asked for Eusebius and St. Cyprian, which he took to Ver-

sailles, where, on April 29th, he himself went; and, on May 1st, in a private audience of Louis XIV., he presented a memorial to the King, asking that his nephew might be appointed his coadjutor, or, if His Majesty pleased, his successor—in which case he would immediately resign. He appealed both to Madame de Maintenon and Cardinal de Noailles to forward his wishes, which, however, he kept very secret, giving it to be generally supposed that his interview with the King had turned upon some totally different subject. The King was prepared for the application by Madame de Maintenon, and, instead of a gracious assent, such as, probably, the venerable Bishop expected, Louis XIV. only answered, "I will see—it is a thing which requires great consideration."[1]

Nothing more was heard about the matter for a time. The Abbé Bossuet pined in restless anxiety and vexation, in a rage with his friends—whom he thought played him false—especially with Cardinal de Noailles, for whom, as he said, he had worked so hard at Rome in the Cambrai matter; and even sulking towards his uncle, because his application had not succeeded; dining alone, and supping and spending the evenings with his sister-in-law, Mme. Bossuet, although he knew his uncle liked to have him at his table, and leaving the Bishop to go out accompanied by Le Dieu only.

[1] *Hist.*, vol. iv. p. 369.

His brother was equally neglectful. In June, no answer having yet been given by the King, the Abbé Bossuet became quite ill, and he told Le Dieu that it was from distress and anxiety, arising, however, as he said, from the illness of Mme. Bossuet and that of his uncle, which he professed to have allowed to be a cause of too great grief to him. "It is all a pure pretence," says the Abbé Le Dieu, "for Mme. Bossuet is in better health than she ever was, and M. de Meaux is so well that one can only hope he may continue so, so that the Abbé ought to be as glad now as he was sorry; and why then does his anxiety continue? why should his blood be so hot and his temper so sharp that he cannot bear the least thing to be said contrary to his own opinion? The real reason is his keen annoyance and anger at seeing himself excluded from the Bishopric of Meaux." [1]

It is painful to think of Bossuet's last days being clouded by the perverse and selfish ingratitude of the nephew for whom he had done so much, and to whose unworthiness possibly natural affection blinded him, though so keen-sighted a man, with such long experience of the world, could hardly help being conscious of the Abbé's real character.

If his nephew neglected the aged Bishop his friends did not. Cardinal de Noailles, Pirot, and Fleury

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 443.

especially were his constant visitors—the latter sometimes spending several hours reading the Bible to him, a companion rarely out of his hand.[1] Le Dieu persisted in trying to think him "*à merveille*," but even he is obliged to own that "those from without think him weaker and sinking." He often heard Mass only, instead of celebrating himself; and the Journal frequently records that he went from his chapel back to his bed exhausted, although perhaps the next entry may be that he "worked as usual." The vigorous brain and fertile intellect would struggle as long as it was possible against the steady advance of pain and infirmity. Early in August the Marquise d'Alègre, after an interview with Bossuet, told Le Dieu that she had never seen him so alive to all that concerned religion—love of the Church, the purity of her doctrine, or the Goodness of God and the devotion due to His Service.

On Friday, August 16, 1703, the Bishop of Meaux went in his litter to Versailles, where he wished to present his book (the second *Instruction* against Simon) to the King, which accordingly he did on the Sunday at the *lever*, but he was so tired with the exertion that he had to go to bed afterwards without even hearing Mass. The Bossuets kept goading him to take measures concerning the See, and the Louis Bossuets came to stay with their uncle in order to be present,

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 460.

as they hoped, at their brother's appointment. Mme. Bossuet, to whom Le Dieu paid his respects while at her toilette, talked eagerly of the nomination, which was daily expected. An audience which they made the Bishop ask of Madame de Maintenon seems not to have been granted till later on,—probably both she and the King felt uncomfortable at wounding the aged prelate with whom they had been so closely bound for so many years, and yet one cannot but see plainly how much there must have been to lead Louis XIV. to refuse promotion to "*le neveu qui va de porte en porte.*" Probably, considering how fast Bossuet's health was failing, the King hoped to avoid having to give a direct refusal;—anyhow, when on August 15th the nominations to bishoprics, eagerly awaited by the "*famille* Bossuet," were made public, appointments were made to Narbonne, Alby and Montauban, but Meaux was not mentioned. The Louis Bossuets went off at once, and Jacques Bossuet, who was at Meaux, arrived shortly at Versailles, "upsetting the whole house with his contemptuous proud temper."

All the Bishop's friends were distressed at the whole episode,—probably they were quite sufficiently alive to his nephew's failings, and to the unlikelihood that his ambitious desires would be gratified, and the Court, whose very atmosphere was one of intrigue and self-seeking, was fully aware of the undignified position of

petitioner into which the aged Bishop was forced. His friends grieved, those who were indifferent pitied him, and hardened old courtiers laughed at him. One would exclaim, "Courage, M. de Meaux! you will succeed in time!" Another, "Poor M. de Meaux, he is well out of it!" and the greater part added, "Why does he not go home and die *chez lui?*" Madame de Maintenon herself expressed astonishment at the Bishop's remaining at Versailles, and asked "s'il vouloit donc mourir à la Cour?"[1] Even the Bishop of Amiens, one of Bossuet's tried friends, spoke with distress to Fleury about the obvious meaning of the sick man still lingering at Court. "It is too sad to see so wise and learned a man, so respected for his great powers, become the laughing-stock of a malicious Court, for want of courage to act for himself, and go home to prepare peaceably for death. Let him get this business of the Bishopric of Meaux settled quickly, and may God inspire him with a mind to do the only thing which beseems his own credit and the general edification."[2]

Friends urged his return, one M. Tanel especially pressed his going to Germigny urgently. "It is true, I ought to be there," Bossuet replied—"but——" The "but" doubtless was the urgency of Jacques Bossuet, who apparently however kept up the game

[1] *Journal*, vol. iii. p. 6. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 469.

through his uncle, and also himself continued to seek interviews with Père de la Chaise, etc. All this constant harass and annoyance brought on fever, and (August 26) the Bishop's mind wandered, and he was not in a condition to receive the Sacraments. He was repeatedly bled, and large doses of quinine were given. As soon as his recollection returned, Bossuet asked to see the Curé of Versailles, M. Hébert, to whom he made his confession, and the nephews took good care to see to his secular affairs, which indeed he had for long left far too much to them. He made his Secretary write to Meaux, commending him to the prayers of the Chapter, adding that he hoped to go and die among them. "*Dieu veuille lui en faire la grâce!*" piously adds the Abbé Le Dieu. Bossuet probably did really wish to go there, for soon afterwards he spoke of Germigny, and how refreshing its pure air would be; and Dodart told the Abbé Fleury that the Bishop had still strength to move, and might go to Meaux, and that as there was now nothing to be done for the complaint, he would be better there than elsewhere. But the Abbé Bossuet pressed the doctors to treat it as impossible, as his object was to keep his uncle near the Court to the last, always hoping that his great influence with the King and Madame de Maintenon might at last succeed. Le Dieu himself thought the time for moving past, and wrote, "We are here for life and death."

Fever returned from time to time, when the Bishop lost consciousness, which distressed him lest he should die without the Sacraments. On September 8, he got up at six o'clock, and had himself carried to the Chapel, where the Curé of Versailles communicated him. At this time he was clearly getting worse, and his removal to Paris was earnestly desired by all except the selfish nephews, whose solicitude seemed confined to their uncle's money; the Abbé receiving his *appointemens*, which amounted to 17,000 francs; while he intreated M. Tanel, who had got the necessary orders for him, to say nothing about it, lest he should be bothered with clamorous debtors.[1] Both brothers wanted to get possession of the Bishop's manuscripts, the Abbé under pretence of wishing to read the *Politique*, while the layman (*maître des requêtes*) inquired about them simply as so much property. "*Voilà de bons ménagers qui ne veulent rien perdre!*" exclaims the Secretary, to whom they separately applied.

At length, Sept. 20, Bossuet was moved to Paris —on "the most beautiful day of the whole year." He was carried by porters to Sèvres, and proceeded thence in a boat, and was not the worse for the

[1] "Voila le fond de cœur de Messieurs les neveux!" writes Le Dieu, "et fiez-vous-y pour les legs, le testament, et les dettes de M. de Meaux, sur lesquelles choses ils lui ont tous trois donné tant de belles paroles!"—*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 5.

journey. For a time the invalid seemed better; he heard Mass most days in his own chapel, he was frequently able to saunter about the garden of the Hôtel de Coislin, and even sometimes in the Tuileries, and he received many visitors;—Bourdaloue, Père de la Chaise, De la Rue, the Archbishop of Rheims, and many others, were continually around him. On the 7th October, he said cheerfully, "I see that God means to preserve me;" and then after Le Dieu had read the 14th chapter of S. John to him, he said, "That is my greatest comfort. One must thank God for giving such comfort in trouble, for I should break down without it."

There was a strong natural clinging to life in him, which seems to have surprised the Abbé Le Dieu, who expresses his wonder that the Bishop's "constant meditation on the Gospels should not have extinguished it." But probably he was not able to appreciate the keen intellectual vigour which remained unimpaired in spite of bodily pain and weakness, and which finds actual pleasure in exercise and work so long as it lasts. There is no sign of a want of resignation in the records of Bossuet's last days, and he frequently spoke of Psalm xxii., and other parts of Holy Scripture specially referring to death, as his constant food and mainstay. He even from time to time dictated some meditations on that Psalm. The

Bible was his first study in the morning, and the last at night after he had finished his Offices, and during his illness he had the Gospel of S. John read through to him no less than sixty times, besides returning continually to the 6th, 15th, and 16th chapters, and various passages from S. Paul's Epistles which dwell most specially on confidence in God's Love and Mercy. The Abbé de Saint-André, who was much with him during the latter part of his illness, says that Bossuet sometimes would make him read over the same chapter five times running, while he sucked up its strength and consolation. The same Priest records that one day after Bossuet had made him read a succession of passages from Holy Scripture touching on predestination, he fell into deep meditation, during which Saint-André did not like to disturb him. In about a quarter of an hour, he burst out, raising himself with eagerness as he spoke, "No, my God, I cannot think that Thou hast given me such trust in Thy goodness for nought! My salvation is far safer in Thy Hands than in mine. I give myself up to Thee without any self-reliance, for it is impossible to look at one's self apart from Thee, O God, without falling into despair." Words such as these, Saint-André says, he repeated continually. But side by side with his religious and devout preparation for the end which could not be far off, his mental activity was marvellous,

and the eagle's wing did not fail in strength in proportion to the general decay. To say nothing of the counsel given to others (for even on his deathbed Bossuet was the one great theologian to whom all his contemporaries turned, and we find Archbishops, Bishops, Doctors, and Abbés consulting him on writings of all kinds), he continued his own theological and literary labours unremittingly. His Second Instruction on the Trévoux Version was finished in the midst of keen bodily pain; he worked on at his book upon the *Cas de Conscience* so earnestly, that on Dec. 18, 1703, Le Dieu writes: "The Bishop's mind becomes so excited about all these points, that unless we divert it by reading or conversation he becomes excited, and is restless and weary in consequence. He said to me, 'In the midst of all this' (his illness) 'I feel that I cannot do all this work. But God's Will be done; I am prepared to die—God will know how to raise up defenders for His Church. If He should see fit to renew my strength, I will use it all to this end.'"

Just before he grew so seriously ill, Bossuet had been keen about revising and enlarging his "Politique Sacrée," and now at the last he frequently reverted to it. He had his "Meditations" and "Élévations" read to him, and talked of adding to them, and also his "Histoire Universelle." "He is setting himself tasks

which he cannot live to accomplish," Le Dieu wrote sorrowfully. Moreover, this Christmas, the very last of his life, he published three letters addressed to M. de Valincour, on the Prophecies of Isaiah, with which were bound up the Paraphrase he had dictated of his favourite Psalm xxii.[1] This book was only given to the public a few days before the author's death.

When the December Ordination came, Bossuet took pleasure in seeing all the Ordinands of his friend the Bishop of Condom, and entertained that prelate at dinner, enjoying a little music in the evening, as he often did; and on Christmas Day—the last he was to see on earth—he heard the usual three Masses, communicating at the first, and "profiting by a ray of sunshine to get a little walk." But through all this activity there were frequent returns of sharp pain, and on the first day of the New Year (1704), a fresh attack of the disease which was killing him, accompanied by fever and unconsciousness, made the physicians think the end was near. He kept exclaiming, "I don't know where I am! what does all this mean?" and his groans were piteous to hear, now that he had no power of controlling the expression of pain. However, this attack subsided, and Bossuet's full mental vigour returned, though not that of his body; he almost lived upon quinine, and did not get beyond his arm-chair

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. ii.

by the fireside, except to hear Mass in his chapel, which he continued to do regularly, whenever it was possible to him to move. He liked to have his friends round him, and the Abbé Le Dieu is often unable to restrain his indignation at the heartless way in which the Louis Bossuets and their brother Jacques forsook the Bishop's sick-room to amuse themselves in the world,[1] often leaving him alone, and returning late in the night, or rather early in the morning. The Bishop never complained. "I am glad they should amuse themselves," he would say patiently, although he found great comfort in being ministered to, "*il se console, pouvu qu'on soit avec lui*," his secretary often says. When no one was present to enliven him in the evening, the Bishop used to have Tillemont's Life of S. Augustine read aloud, and he sent for his own copy of that book from Meaux, in order to mark it freely. Some days he was very weak, and could only return to his bed after Mass. "Thank God for giving rest

[1] Mme. Bossuet must have been a thoroughly worldly woman. The gossip of Le Dieu lets this out on many occasions; *e.g.* on the death of her aunt the Comtesse de Novion, for which Mme. Bossuet "*fait bien la pleureuse*," saying that she regretted her "infiniment *parce qu'elle étoit si amusante!* c'est la raison que Mme. Bossuet m'a dite à moi-même." The worthy Abbé moralises a little thereon: "Tel est l'esprit du monde; il ne s'afflige pas du mort des justes à cause de leur piété, de leurs bons exemples, mais parce qu'il perd eu eux des consolations sensibles et des douceurs humaines : quelle amitié!"—*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 38.

to my weakness," he would say at such times. But even then he liked to be read to, and seemed unwilling to lose time. That January was a very severe month, and tried the sick man much, a bad cold adding to his discomforts. He was delighted when at last a thaw came. "It is a real thaw, is it not?" he asked eagerly; "we shall not have any more cold?"

The Abbé Bossuet was still intent on obtaining the Bishopric of Meaux, and in October 1703 his uncle signed his own resignation, with the hope of his nephew's gratification. The Abbé himself seems to have left no stone unturned, and was continually flitting backwards and forwards to Versailles, making up to every one who could by any possibility promote his views. Evidently the King avoided a direct refusal for his old friend's sake, perceiving that it was not for long that these earthly matters would trouble him; but the ambitious Abbé met with no success, though sometimes when he returned from Versailles "pleasant and gracious and speaking civilly to every one, contrary to wont," his uncle's secretary supposed he must have conceived fresh hopes.

Lent came (it fell early that year), and Bossuet sent the Abbé Le Dieu to the Curé of Saint Roch, in whose parish he was living, for a dispensation from abstinence. His family set a less edifying example. The Abbé said he had been ill last Easter in consequence of keeping

Lent, and dispensed himself or was dispensed.[1] The whole party of relations[2] (we should infer that the Abbé refrained, though Abbé Rose was one of the masqueraders) went off on Shrove-Tuesday after supper to a masked ball, and stayed out all the night! On Ash-Wednesday Mme. Bossuet got up at noon, and hurried to the chapel to receive the ashes and hear a late Mass which the Abbé Le Dieu said for her dying uncle, and then went back to bed. "*Quelle vie!*" the Abbé ejaculates.

Lent passed on—many visitors came daily to see the sick man,—he was busy with the proofs of his last book, but sharp pains often occurred, which were more to be discovered by his altered countenance than anything else; for he always strove to control complaint. Some days he was too ill to see any one, and after eight days of increasing suffering, one night, after he was alone as he thought in bed, Le Dieu heard him say to himself, "O my God! what is this? I must resign myself!" His nights became extremely suffering between pain and restlessness, and he could

[1] "Il fut malade l'année dernière après Pâques d'avoir,—dit-il, fait le carême; ainsi il prévient sagement cette année la maladie en laissant là le carême pour ceux qui, se portant bien, comme il fait, n'ont d'ailleurs rien à craindre."—*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 60.

[2] The De Chasots—another nephew and his wife—seem also to have quartered themselves upon the Bishop of Meaux frequently.

only snatch a few moments of sleep at intervals; yet notwithstanding this, on March 2nd, in spite of remonstrance, Mme. Bossuet gave a magnificent and noisy entertainment "*en gras et en maigre*," in the Bishop's house, while he lay dying and craving for quiet! That night was worse than usual, and the aged Bishop fell the next day into the same state of unconsciousness which had alarmed his doctors before; and when this passed away, his weakness was extreme, though his mind was perfectly clear. He could hardly get from his bed to his arm-chair, supported by two servants; his emaciation was extreme, and his face sunken and hollow. One evening, as he was being supported thus to his chair, one of his servants congratulated the Bishop on moving more easily than he had done during the past week, and said something about his recovery. Bossuet checked him directly. "Hush!" he said, "do not flatter me." About this time, too, he began to hear Mass in his room, having no longer strength to go to his chapel; and he evidently felt his end approaching, saying to the doctors Dodart and Tournefort, who were in constant attendance, "Anyhow, gentlemen, you know what you are about;—you will give me notice when I ought to receive the last Sacraments." He told the bystanders that during his seeming unconsciousness he was meditating upon the words, "Positus est hic in ruinam et in resurrectionem."

His friend, the Abbé Saint-André, was now sharing in the attendance, and he says that Bossuet continually consulted him and the Superior of the Seminary at Meaux (who also frequently came to see his Bishop) on matters which concerned his own conscience, and that with such a touching simplicity, as to surprise and edify the two priests. On some occasion one of them expressed his astonishment that one so learned and experienced should have recourse on spiritual matters to those who were so immeasurably his inferiors. "You are mistaken," Bossuet answered, "God only gives us light for other men, He hides it from ourselves, and often leaves us in the dark as to our own guidance."

March 15th, de Tournefort thought the Bishop rather stronger. "Do not deceive me," he said; "God's Will be done: I am well aware how weak I am." The next day he expressed a wish for the last Sacraments. The Vicaire of Saint-Roch came on the 17th, and confessed him, and after hearing Mass, for which on this occasion he got into the chapel, he spoke much of the blessing of dying at the time of our Lord's Passion. That was Monday in Holy Week; and after Mass (during which he repeated the Creed with singular energy and earnestness) he received the Blessed Sacrament *in viaticum*, and afterwards said the Te Deum, as thanksgiving, taking the alternate

verse in a strong voice, and he was even able to remain and hear a second Mass. On each day in Holy Week he asked to have the Offices and Passion read to him, and expressed his intense comfort from the latter. On Good Friday (March 20) he had all the service for the day read to him, and those portions of the Epistle to the Hebrews which occur in the Tenebræ; but later in the day he all at once became so weak, that Dodart feared he might pass away suddenly, and he could not bear even a familiar Psalm throughout. His own thoughts wearied him, he said, and, characteristically enough, even his powerful memory added just now to his trials, for certain Odes of Horace would keep troubling it, and he had not strength either to recall the literal words or to put the whole thing away. Very wisely he asked to have the Odes read to him, and thus was able to dismiss the annoyance.

On Easter Eve the Bishop heard Mass from his bed, and remained very feeble. Le Dieu was reading the Offices aloud when the Abbé Fleury came to see him, but Bossuet refused to admit Fleury, and was impatient at the pause in those sacred words which alone gave him comfort. As he grew weaker the power of restraining his expressions of pain naturally diminished, and frequent sickness added to his troubles. "God's Will be done!" was his constant exclamation.

During Easter Week he seemed a little better, sat by his fire to dine, and was able to attend to reading, hearing with interest a book, "De la Souveraineté des Rois," said to be written by Quesnel, and the Life of a Capucin Father Joseph. But when the Abbé de Saint-André returned from a necessary visit to Meaux, he found his beloved chief very markedly worse. Bossuet greeted him affectionately as "*bien arrivé.*" "I feel the machine going to pieces," he said; "let us both ask God to give me sufficient grace to bear patiently and die well. Let us pray often," he added; "only but little at a time, because of my pain. Let us say the Lord's Prayer again and again,—that is the one most perfect of all prayers, one which includes everything; and pause particularly on the words, FIAT VOLUNTAS TUA."

Drowsiness increased upon the sick man, together with weakness, and he could not hold up his head to take his soup. One of his attendants settled it comfortably. "All very well," he said patiently, "if it would only stay so!"

By April 1st he had lost almost all inclination to take any nourishment, and lay in extreme weakness, and for the most part silent, save that they often heard him whisper, "My God, have pity on me!" or "*Adveniat regnum Tuum,*" "*Fiat Voluntas Tua.*"

The frightful way in which, according to the medical notions of that day, he was drenched with physic,[1] must have aggravated his weakness and discomfort as much as it was possible to do. On the 7th the doctors said nothing more could be done, and those in charge proposed again to administer the last Sacraments. He made his confession to the Vicaire of Saint-Roch that evening—his mind very active and full of awe of God's Judgment, so he said himself. But faith was no less alive in him, and he was in perfect tranquillity, seldom speaking, never complaining, but full of resignation, often ejaculating, "*Fiat Voluntas Tua.*" At six o'clock, on the morning of April 8, Bossuet received Extreme Unction and the Viaticum, making all the responses firmly, clearly and devoutly, "without any ostentation, as docile as a humble sheep in the Church's common fold." He had had some fears as to his power of swallowing, but with the help of a little wine he was able to swallow the Sacred Host.

The next day Cardinal de Noailles came to see him, and the Abbé Bossuet, who was present, asked him to give his uncle a blessing. The Archbishop

[1] "Avril 2. J'ai l'estomac bien dérangé, disoit-il ce matin; cependant on lui donne mille drogues pour le lui fortifier et nettoyer, mais tout sans effet. . . . 3. Ces jours passés les medecins ordonnèrent jusqu'à douze grains par jour d'aloès," etc.—*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 92.

did so, and asked his old friend in turn for his benediction. Even so late as this Bossuet whispered a commendation of his ungrateful nephew to the Cardinal, who made a soothing reply.

All the natural functions of the sick man's frame seemed paralysed save those of his mind, and the physicians told the watchers that no help save in the last prayers for the dying remained. On the night of the 10th and 11th, thinking the last hour was come, the Abbé Bossuet asked for his uncle's blessing, and the others all did the same.

The Abbé Le Dieu spoke of his personal gratitude to his master, and said something about his remembering the friends who had been so devoted to his service and glory. The last word jarred on the dying man's ear, already realising the utter worthlessness of earthly glory and the nearness of Judgment, and he raised himself with a momentary nervous strength in his bed, and uttered distinctly, "Leave such words alone. Ask God to forgive me my sins."

He sent a message of kindness to Mademoiselle de Mauléon, and asked for M. Hébert, the Curé of Versailles, just nominated Bishop of Agen; but by the time he arrived his old friend was unable to speak articulately, and M. Hébert could not understand anything he said. Through the day he rallied a little, and about nine in the evening, when, noticing that his

hands and feet were struck with the death-chill, those around began to say the prayers for the last agony, the old Bishop roused himself from his lethargy, and followed the prayers, devoutly making audible responses. His sufferings became very severe, and the attendants often heard him say in broken accents, "DOMINE, VIM PATIOR, SED NON CONFUNDOR," "SCIO ENIM CUI CREDIDI," "FIAT VOLUNTAS TUA."

Towards midnight he seemed to sleep, and all save the Abbé de Saint-André went to bed, not expecting any immediate change. He however thought differently, and remained closely watching beside his dear old friend. He was right. About three the Bishop woke, and vainly endeavoured to swallow a spoonful of *bouillon*. The Abbé said a brief prayer, which soothed him for a while; but towards 4 a.m. Saint-André found his pulse fast failing, and when he held the Bishop's Crucifix before him, a sign with head and hand was all Bossuet had strength to make. The Abbé said aloud some few passages from the Office for the dying, and rather before half-past four the venerable Bishop heaved two or three slight sighs, and passed peacefully from this life. His faithful Archdeacon closed his eyes, murmuring, "Truly a great light is gone out, and there is a bright torch the less in God's Church."

Directly that the Abbé Bossuet was informed of his

uncle's death, and denying the fact to such members of the household as did not already know it, he went off to Marly, where the King then was, and through Père de La Chaise obtained audience of Louis XIV., to whom he announced the departure of his long-tried friend. The King was much touched, and before the interview ended he appointed Jacques Bossuet to the Abbey of Saint-Lucien de Beauvais. It was not what the Abbé wanted, but it was better than nothing, and he came back cheerful and rejoicing to the house where his great relative lay, still scarcely cold in death, and where already his brother Louis had made haste to seal up the cabinet where he had put their uncle's plate, and another where his books were kept.

That afternoon the body was examined, and the extremely aggravated nature of the disease which was the cause of death was clearly ascertained. It was then embalmed and placed in a coffin bearing the inscription:

"HIC QUIESCIT RESURRECTIONEM EXPECTANS, JACOBUS BENIGNUS BOSSUET, Episcopus Meldensis, Comes Consistorianus, Serenissimi Delphini preceptor primus, Serenissimi Ducis Burgundiæ eleemosynarius, Universitatis Parisiensis privilegiorum apostolicarum Conservator, ac Collegii regii Navarræ Superior. Obiit Anno Domini M.D.CC.IV. die XII. Aprilis, annos natus LXXVI. menses VI. et dies XVI."

On Sunday, April 13th, the earthly remains of the

great Bishop were moved to the Church of Saint-Roch, attended by a large gathering of his friends; and on the 16th the funeral procession started at six in the morning for Meaux, the body accompanied by two priests of Saint-Roch, the Bishop of Agen (lately Curé of Versailles), Bossuet's nephews and immediate attendants following. At Claye they stopped and said a funeral mass. As the procession approached Meaux all the population turned out to meet the last return of their Bishop;—men were perhaps rather proud of his learning and eloquence than personally bound to him by softer ties. The body rested that night in the Church of the Seminary, and the next day, April 17, 1704, the funeral was celebrated with all the pomp and reverence attainable in the Cathedral. The Abbé Le Dieu gives a most minute account of every detail with a precision scarcely interesting now. The Bishop of Agen celebrated pontifically; and in the presence of a great multitude, Bossuet's body was laid in the spot named in his will, *i.e.* a vault within the Sanctuary, somewhat in front of the high altar on the Epistle side, and there it still rests. Probably the fact of no desecration having occurred during the Revolution is to be attributed to Cardinal de Bissy's having removed the stone which marked the spot in 1724, when he repaired the Sanctuary. This stone was put behind the high altar, and it is supposed that the sacrilegious hands

which disturbed the dead at Meaux, as elsewhere, during the dreary days of the Revolution, finding no tombs beneath the inscriptions, did not take the trouble to look further, and contented themselves with defacing the stone to a certain extent. After a while, in spite of the local tradition and of Le Dieu's notes, uncertainty prevailed as to the exact spot where the venerable remains lay, and the present Bishop, Monseigneur Allou, greatly desired to ascertain the precise resting-place of his famous predecessor. Accordingly, on Nov. 8, 1854, the vaults beneath the Sanctuary were opened, and Bossuet's coffin, bearing the inscription already given, was found, placed, as he had desired, at the feet of his immediate forerunner, de Ligny.[1] On the 14th the coffin was brought out of the vault, opened and reverently examined — the head only being uncovered, which was found perfect in form, the skin dry, the teeth and hair preserved (the mouth was slightly open).

An interesting record of this day was given by M. Floquet, dated—

"FORMENTIN, CALVADOS, *Nov.* 16, 1854.

"*On my return from Meaux after the discovery and recognition of Bossuet's coffin.*

"Returning from Meaux, where I have been spending two days in Bossuet's Cathedral, I feel an urgent

[1] *Hist. de la Cathédrale de Meaux*, par Mgr. Allou, p. 59.

desire to narrate what I have been privileged to see. There, in a coffin just opened, I beheld the revered head of the great Bishop, majestic, beaming, almost exactly such as Rigault painted it at Germigny in 1701. I saw that inspired mouth, ready yet, as it well-nigh seemed, to utter those words of power which God had committed to him. A limited number of Priests and laymen crowded round the sleeping pontiff, gazing eagerly upon him, waiting, awestruck, almost listening as though he might yet speak; the whole house of God was hushed in the silence of reverence and devotion; and ere long, at a sign given by the venerable and pious successor of Bossuet, who was visibly moved by the spectacle, every one simultaneously followed his example and knelt down, and followed him in a loud fervent *De Profundis*, more striking, more solemn than any ever uttered at the royal obsequies of Saint-Denis. The next day the fine Church was hung with black, and the venerated coffin placed beneath a pall, while a funeral service, the last office rendered to the great Bishop, was celebrated, and noble words were spoken concerning him.[1] The multitude present was earnest and sympathetic, silent, attentive, taking an intense interest both in the touching scene of the previous day and in the actual service. In short, all—clergy, men of the world, people—all seemed as

[1] By the Abbé Réaume, Canon of Meaux.

thoughtful and interested as though this dead man, who has lain here one hundred and fifty years, had died last night!"[1] The body remained twenty-four hours in the Sanctuary, during which a perpetual stream of people came to look upon it; and on the 16th, after vespers, it was reverently restored to its resting-place. The old damaged black marble slab was replaced, but above it a new slab was laid, with the same inscription renewed:—

A Ω

HIC QUESCIT RESURRECTIONEM EXPECTANS,
JACOBUS BENIGNUS BOSSUET,
EPISCOPUS MELDENSIS,
COMES, CONSISTORIANUS,
SERENISSIMI DELPHINI PRÆCEPTOR,
PRIMUS SERENISSIMÆ DELPHINÆ,
DEINDE SERENISSIMÆ DUCIS BURGUNDIÆ
ELEEMOSYNARIUS:
UNIVERSITATIS PARISIENSIS
PRIVILEGIORUM APOSTOLICORUM CONSERVATOR,
AC COLLEGII REGII NAVARRÆ,
SUPERIOR.
OBIIT ANNO DOMINI M.D.CC.IV.
DIE XII. APRILIS,
ANNOS NATUS LXXVI. MENSES VI. ET DIES XVI.
VIRTUTIBUS, VERBO, AC DOCTRINA.
CLARUIT IN EPISCOPATU ANNOS XXXIV.
E QUIBUS MELDIS SEDIT XXII.

[1] *Études sur la Vie de Bossuet*, vol. i. p. xii.

Bossuet's arms—three wheels or on azure—are at the top, and below are figured a mitre, palm branches, and three books, on which appear the names : BIBLIA SACRA : SANCTUM JESUM CHRISTUM EVANGELIUM on the one ; EXPOSITION ATHANASIUS, GREGORIUS NAZIANZEN on the second ; and AUGUSTINUS, HIERONYMUS, and VARIATIONS on the third. Must one confess to a little sense of irritation that even here we cannot get rid of the irrepressible Abbé Bossuet, and of annoyance that his unworthy name should be perpetuated on his great uncle's grave?

"Jacobus Benignus Bossuet,
Abbas Ste. Luciani Bellovacensis
Et Archidiaconus Meldensis
Patrus Colendiss. Lugens posuit."

Not long since I knelt beside the grave wherein so much learning and eloquence lies crumbled to dust, as all earthly things must do, and then talked with the quaint, old-fashioned royalist sacristan of the Cathedral, whose historical knowledge of and interest in Bossuet were considerably less than what he felt concerning the Prussians, of whose occupation of the town and Cathedral during the late war he was keen to tell. "Doubtless the Bishop who lay there was a great man—he knew Monseigneur that is said so ; and sometimes there came some one who seemed to think much of him and his books, as Madame does—

*Mais enfin, que voulez vous, le monde s'en va!*" and the old man went off to ring the Angelus, on the whole feeling that pilgrims to Bossuet's grave were, after some dim, unexpressed fashion, a tribute to his own merit, and therefore worthy of encouragement.

According to the custom of the time, a grand funeral ceremonial was held in the Cathedral of Meaux the summer following Bossuet's death. The Church was decked with enough black velvet and cloth adorned with silver and heraldic devices to delight the Abbé Le Dieu, and on July 23, 1704, the Archbishop of Narbonne celebrated pontifically, assisted by the Bishops of Condom, Tulles, Troyes, and Autun, together with many of the most eminent of the French Clergy.

The Père de la Rue, a Jesuit Father, had been invited to preach the funeral sermon. He took as his text 2 Chron. xxxi. 20, 21 : "Operatusque est bonum et rectum et verum, coram Domino Deo suo, in universa cultura ministerii domus Domini, juxta legem et ceremonias, volens requirere Deum suum in toto corde suo, fecitque et prosperatus est." ("He wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

All funeral orations, those spoken by Bossuet himself excepted, fall with a strained unreal sound upon one's ear—panegyric being usually the one object aimed at; and we need not dwell on that delivered by the Jesuit Father, or on the eulogium spoken by Cardinal de Polignac at the Académie Française, where he was Bossuet's successor. Perhaps the most remarkable point of this was the speaker's total silence respecting the controversy with Fénelon. A funeral oration was also spoken in honour of Bossuet at Rome in January 1705.

The Abbé Le Dieu, on the whole, dwells with more interest on the episcopal banquet which took place after the ceremonies of July 23 than on the oration. He does not fail to record "*les faisandeaux et les perdreaux;*" or that the secretaries' table was as well served as that of the prelates, and the wine supplied as good![1]

Already, in this short time, the Abbé Bossuet had exchanged his uncle's old-fashioned plate for a magnificent and fashionable service, and the soft springed-carriage had given place to a "*belle et bonne berline,*" then a new kind of vehicle, which to modern ideas is oddly described as much lighter than the ordinary carriages in use.

But the Abbé complains that the servants who had

[1] *Journal*, vol. iii. p. 137.

been recommended to his care, and the poor, had received nothing. He himself was anxious to get what he could; and, recording how he asked Jacques Bossuet for a certain enamelled chalice which he had been wont to use when celebrating for the Bishop at Paris, he adds, "I shall follow up this request, and drag what I can out of these gentlemen, since they have not the common civility to give or offer me anything!"[1] The Abbé Le Dieu kept up a sort of grumbling clanship attachment to his late master's nephew, whose ingratitude for all his attentions, to say nothing of his long and faithful service to the Bishop, he often reviles. For a long time the Abbé Bossuet kept Le Dieu in play, utilising him in the revision and arrangement of his uncle's manuscripts,[2]—whether or no intending to take to himself the credit of the "noble, concise, simple, clear, touching and elegant style," in which Le Dieu tells us all good judges considered his

[1] *Journal*, vol. iii. p. 260.

[2] The Abbé Bossuet made the best thing he could of his uncle's manuscripts and books, clearing out of the latter "*at least*" all that he had a right to. "Tous les livres absolument ont été ôtés de la bibliothèque, et tous les ornemens avec leurs armoires emportés de la sacristie, même les livres à l'usage de l'Église Cathédrale, les gens de l'Abbé disant : 'Si l'Évêque en a besoin, il les demandera.'"—*Ibid.* p. 225. He owned to having removed all he could find of manuscripts and the "*livres d'estampes de la bibliothèque*" the Easter before, "*prévoyant la mort prochaine.*"—*Ibid.* p. 121.

Mémoires to be written,[1] we cannot say. Certainly the Secretary imputes such unworthy intentions to his master's nephew; but we must confess that the Abbé Le Dieu is much addicted to imputing evil motives to most of those of whom he writes, and the result left on one's mind by his Journals is not calculated to raise one's estimate of human nature. He says that the Abbé Bossuet thought to recompense him sufficiently for all his services by giving him a bed once or twice a year when passing through Paris,[2]—"a civility," he says elsewhere, "which I had the still greater civility not to accept."[3] But he let himself be counted as one of the Abbé's partisans, and he remained on at Meaux, living in the Evêché, and feeding at his expense, during the prolonged time for which Jacques Bossuet still endeavoured to make something profitable for himself out of his uncle's name. Apparently he yet had some hopes of the Bishopric, and when that was announced as about to be given to M. de Bissy, Bishop of Toul, the Abbé Bossuet made great professions of admiration for him, and intrigued for a time to obtain his Vicar-General-

[1] "Ces messieurs m'ont dit . . . que l'ouvrage est curieux, piquant, et d'une grande édification, qu'il y a même de l'élévation et de la beauté dans le style, et que de la manière que je m'y prends et avec les particularités que j'ai recueillies, il n'y a que moi qui puisse faire un tel ouvrage."—*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 381.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 376.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 147.

ship. Various delays occurred, and it was not till March 1705 that de Bissy's procurator took possession of the temporalities of Meaux on behalf of the new Bishop. In the May following he came himself, and for many months an undignified struggle to get everything possible out of him went on on the part of the Bossuets, and hardly less so on that of Le Dieu and Phelippeaux, who had turned entirely against his former friend and associate in the Cambrai intrigues, and who could not now do or say enough to blacken Jacques Bossuet's character.[1] The whole behind-scene is a tissue of mean, time-serving, self-interested doings, every one's hand against every one else—the de Bissys quarrelling with the Bossuets over dilapidations and architects' bills, turning one another's orange-trees out into the frost out of spite! and all the while fawning and caressing when anything is to be got. Jacques Bossuet spoke "*sans ménagement*" of his uncle's successor; and when the suggestion of his receiving a Cardinal's hat arose, he remarked contemptuously, "That at that rate there must be a great many hats to spare!"[2]

[1] "Tout ce que M. Phelippeaux disoit des désordres de l'Abbé à Rome, car il n'en faisoit pas la petite bouche; il m'a dit en particulier des choses affreuses. . . . Les bruits publics confirment qu'il ne disoit que la vérité."—*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 203.

[2] "Il faudroit qu'il y eut bien des chapeaux de reste!"—*Ibid.* p. 184.

Le Dieu abused them both! He was very anxious to get employment from the new Bishop, and had himself recommended to de Bissy as best he could. The Abbé Bossuet reviled him for this, and said that he (Le Dieu) had always been ill-disposed to him. "*Au reste*, he is right," says the Secretary; "I have never liked him, because I never met with anything but ill-treatment from him; never in all my life the least token of friendship, small or great. And I know his *hauteur* too well to put myself under so hard and heavy a hand."[1] But beyond continuing the revision of the Meaux Missal, which Le Dieu had begun under Bossuet, and which the new Bishop employed him to finish, de Bissy never gave him any preferment, and he lived and died in possession of his old offices of Chancellor and Canon of Meaux. Le Dieu's Journal, which is continued up to a short time before his death, in Oct. 1713, gives a curious picture of the interior of the Chapter, its petty squabbles, jealousies of place and rank, contests over small rights and gains, and persevering opposition and cabal one against another. Nothing can be more perfect as a bit of Dutch painting than the good Secretary's accounts of his own domestic arrangements—the feastings of the Cathedral town, its "*bonne chère*," the excellent wine sometimes given by the Bishop and the Dean (though he does not fail to

[1] *Journal*, vol. iii. p. 214.

note that the "*bon vin de Champagne et d'Alicante*" are only forthcoming when the former wanted the Chapter's[1] votes!); his own little visits,—when he greatly liked to be received, "*en perfection, avec bonne chère et grand feu, et bon lit;*"[2] his bargaining over his tapestry and the like—all mixed up with minute details of ritual, accounts of sermons, and in truth be it told, with not a little ill-natured gossip concerning his colleagues and the authorities. Bossuet's successor seems not to have been worthy of treading in such a man's steps, and the diocese had been accustomed to better things. Le Dieu says that, in 1703, Bossuet himself pronounced de Bissy, then Bishop of Toul, to be a "*fripon*,"[3] which might somewhat excuse Jacques Bossuet's perpetual mistrust,[4] and zealous heed to his own interest. De Bissy seems to have estranged his Clergy by his harsh, proud, interfering ways, and he certainly was in continual hot water with the Dean and Chapter, the Seminary, etc. Le Dieu says that both the Bishop and his immediate attendance were lamentably ignorant of all detail and ceremonial. He describes de Bissy's first Ordination as "all going by haphazard;" and says that "such confusion and such ignorance of the rubrics had never been seen;"

[1] *Journal*, vol. iv. p. 18. [2] *Ibid.* p. 326. [3] *Ibid.* p. 26.

[4] "L'Abbé Bossuet a œil à tout, et agit toujours avec défiance dans la crainte qu'on ne le trompe."—Vol. iv. p. 27.

winding up with the pious ejaculation, "*Dieu soit loué de tout! je n'ai à repondre de rien lorsque je ne suis pas même consulté!*"[1] or again, "Yesterday and to-day there were more mistakes than ever in the pontifical offices, because those who make the arrangements know nothing about them, and the Bishop does not care in the least, and does not make a habit of performing ceremonies rightly, or of chanting properly."[2]

Naturally Bossuet's old friends were keenly alive to the contrast, and so they were to the different manner of life led at Germigny by the new Bishop, who never attended Mass or any other service at the parish church, neither did any of his household; while his chaplain, whose name was Denis, scandalised the neighbourhood by going out shooting as much as he could, and being met "*en pourpoint*, with a gamebag at his waist, a gun on his shoulder, and three or four rabbits dangling at his back!"[3] Moreover, de Bissy never took part in any of the Diocesan Conferences, which his predecessor had watched with so much care, and the bystanders not unnaturally commented on the omission, saying that "doctrine would be greatly lowered under this prelate, who lost such opportunities of stimulating the Curés to study; and opining that he himself had no great amount of theology."[4]

[1] *Journal*, vol. iii. p. 250.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 273.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 390.
[4] Vol. iv. p. 3.

The Bossuets hovered about Meaux for a long while: it was not till November 1706 that Jacques Bossuet finally paid all his uncle's dues, and sold everything that remained, the linen, even the old tables, timbers, etc. At last the Abbé Le Dieu records, Nov. 2nd, "*Ainsi, pour le coup, voilà les Bossuets partis de Meaux;—la maison rendue et vidée: Dieu soit loué!*"[1]

We have lingered a little over these after details, partly because they are in themselves so curious and illustrative of the times in which they happened, partly as all throwing light upon our special object—the history of the great Bossuet, and partly from a vague sense that there is a lesson to be learnt by ourselves, from realising that all was not perfect and ideal in days gone by any more than in our own—that at the very time when great works for God and His Church were being brought about, and saintly characters formed, and marvels of learning and theology trained, men had to contend with much the same troubles and trials as we have:—that Cathedrals and their Chapters did not always fulfil the great works for which their founders designed them—that religious houses fell into laxity and disorder—that some Bishops fell short of the standard of a Bossuet or a Fénelon, and parish priests were often secular and self-seeking—

[1] Vol. iv. p. 19.

that Jesuit raged against Jansenist, Oratorian or Port-Royalist, and that good men, all seeking God's Glory really and truly, found it hard to see anything right or good in their opponents' opinions or doings. In short, that history, whether on a large or small scale, sets the same spectacle before us of human infirmity, human jealousy, seeking itself, while thinking to do God service. Is there not a lesson for each student of history to learn and to practise—of love, patience, toleration, so that at least, if it be true—and Truth Itself has said it—that "offences must come," each one of us, in our several paths (and there is surely none so lowly, so unimportant a link in the great chain of the world's life as not to have his own path in which to tread rightly or wrongly), may give good heed not to incur the denunciation, "Woe be to him through whom the offence cometh;" but may be ready to say with Dante,—

"La nostra carita non serra porte
A giusta voglia, se non come quella,
Che vuol simile a se tutta sua corte."

*Paradiso*, c. iii.

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